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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat on Proclamation of State, Syria Ties

MM1706150796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Jun 96 p 3

[Interview with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat by Salih Qallab in Gaza; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Qallab] You proclaimed the creation of a Palestinian state at the [Palestine] National Council [PNC] session in Algiers back in 1988 but we recall that, on the sidelines of the tripartite summit held in al-'Aqabah, you announced you would again declare the establishment of such a state. In what new context do you intend to announce it?

['Arafat] I meant I would proclaim the establishment of a Palestinian state on Palestinian territory. The 1988 declaration was a declaration of a state in exile. We considered the PLO Executive Committee to be a provisional government in exile. But now that we have held our legislative and presidential elections and have come some way in building our national establishments and institutions, the next step will be the proclamation of the Palestinian people's state on their own Palestinian territory.

[Qallab] Is this not just a reaction to Netanyahu's victory in the recent Israeli elections?

['Arafat] Not at all. Since we set foot on the homeland's soil, I have been saying continuously that we will establish our Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. Now I repeat what I have been saying because I feel that the time has come for the declaration of the Palestinian people's state on their own Palestinian territory.

I wish to remind people that, in the most difficult times, I used to say that we were looking into a dark tunnel but that I could see Jerusalem's walls, minarets, and churches at the end of that tunnel.

[Qallab] It was noteworthy that your announcement that you would proclaim a Palestinian state on Palestinian territory came after your return from your recent visit to Britain. Did you discuss the matter with British Prime Minister John Major?

['Arafat] My recent visit to Britain was successful and my meetings with British officials were fruitful and important. Suffice it to say here that the British position is strong and solid regarding the future of the Palestinian people, the peace process, our right to self-determination, and our right to establish our own independent state. British Prime Minister Major told me during my recent visit to London that his door would remain open to me. He told me Britain would continue to support the Palestinian people's rights and to move in that direction within Europe and at the industrial states' summit to be held at the end of this month.

[Qallab] Is it not strange that Britain, which made the Balfour Declaration and supported the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, is now so clearly embracing the objective of establishing a Palestinian entity?

['Arafat] We do not want to let the past control the present and the future. Every circumstance has its equations and elements. What matters to us now is that Britain is taking a firm and honorable stand in support of the Palestinian people's rights. Let me point out here that we have agreed to make Bethlehem, the city which marked the beginning of the human calendar based on the birth of Christ, the twin city of Greenwich, the global mean time center.

[Qallab] Did you hold consultations with the big powers, especially the United States, on the question of your intention to declare a Palestinian state on Palestinian territory?

['Arafat] Yes. As you know, I have recently received a warm message from U.S. President Bill Clinton putting emphasis on just, comprehensive, and lasting peace and stressing that the peace process would continue and that the Palestinian-Israeli agreements signed would be implemented.

Let me also point out here that the same position was conveyed to me from French President Jacques Chirac, a firm and clear position on Palestinian rights, and the same position from German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Greece, the rest of the European states, Russia, China, Japan, Canada, Australia, and most Asian, African, and Latin American states.

[Qallab] A declaration of the Palestinian state in the way you are contemplating would present the new Israeli prime minister with a fait accompli. Do you not fear you might be faced with what the Chechens faced when they declared their own republic, independent of Russia?

['Arafat] There is an agreement between me and the Israelis that the negotiations on the final phase must resolve the main issues such as independence, the borders, Jerusalem, the refugees, and the settlements. That is an integral part of the Oslo agreements.

[Qallab] Was there an agreement with the Labor Party and Shim'on Peres on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state?

['Arafat] I said it most clearly to the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and the current Prime

Minister Shim'on Peres, and I say it at the outset of Netanyahu's term.... This is a Palestinian position which does not change, and the Palestinian legislative and presidential elections should be seen as a manifestation of Palestinian sovereignty over Palestinian territory. Now there are three independent Palestinian authorities, independent of one another, namely the legislative authority, the judicial authority, and the executive authority. Are these not features of an independent state?

[Qallab] Is it true that you were surprised and shocked by Netanyahu's election as Israeli prime minister?

['Arafat] We have addressed the Israeli elections on the basis that we do not interfere in Israeli internal affairs. We respect the Israeli people's democratic choice. True, the Oslo agreements and appendixes were signed during the reign of Rabin and Peres but it should not be forgotten that these agreements were concluded with the State of Israel and that when the peace process began with the Madrid conference, Yitzhaq Shamir was prime minister and Netanyahu was the official spokesman of the Israeli delegation to the negotiations.

[Qallab] But the majority of the Arabs of the 1948 territory [Israel proper] voted for Peres.

['Arafat] Yes, that is true and the reason is that the Arabs in that region represented the line which initiated peace with the Palestinian people.

[Qallab] It has been said that you personally intervened on this matter and put some pressure on the Palestinians of the 1948 territory to vote for Peres.

['Arafat] That is not true at all. The Palestinian leadership did not interfere in that matter at all.

[Qallab] Were there any secret channels of contact between you and the Likud and Netanyahu at some stage before the elections?

['Arafat] No, by God, there were no such contacts or channels.

[Qallab] Why not?

['Arafat] Because they were not interested in such contacts.

[Qallab] Did you make any efforts in that respect?

['Arafat] We tried many times. Some meetings did occur at the academic level but our attempts to raise them to the political and leadership levels did not succeed.

[Qallab] But some people claim that there were unannounced meetings and contacts between you and the settlements organizations.

['Arafat] Yes, and a group of them came to me here in Gaza and we had long discussions about the peace process and the future of the settlements built on Palestinian territory...but that is one thing and political contacts with the Likud Party are quite another.

[Qallab] Apart from the announced contacts, have there been any contacts with Netanyahu since his election as Israeli prime minister?

['Arafat] Not at all.

[Qallab] The first step after Netanyahu's victory should have been finding a mechanism for understanding with the new Israeli prime minister. Has any state made such an attempt?

['Arafat] There is a very great international eagerness to preserve the peace process, ensure its continuation, and push it forward.

[Qallab] But were there any attempts to bring you and Netanyahu together?

['Arafat] No, not at all.

[Qallab] Did the United States and some European parties not make any such attempts?

['Arafat] Not at all.

[Qallab] When will the negotiations between you and the Israelis begin, whether on issues pertaining to interim solutions or issues pertaining to the final phase?

['Arafat] We insist that these negotiations should be resumed on the set dates.

[Qallab] And what would you do if they were not?

['Arafat] We would go to the sponsors of the peace process and to the EU. The agreement concluded between us was not an agreement between us and the Labor Party. It was an agreement between us and the Israeli Government. The Israeli Government, regardless of which is the ruling party, should honor its signature.

[Qallab] Do you not fear that Netanyahu might take the advice of Shamir who has said the negotiations should be allowed to continue for 10 years but without results?

['Arafat] The Oslo agreements are not bilateral agreements. They are international agreements signed in various capitals and witnessed, in addition to the two sponsors of the peace process, by many Arab and foreign states. The Security Council and the United Nations were also notified of these agreements.

[Qallab] The U.S. elections are on the way. Do you believe that President Clinton can put real pressure on Netanyahu?

['Arafat] I do not rule out the possibility of some obstruction and procrastination but, generally speaking, the agreements we signed with Israel are international agreements, the world must honor its commitments, and these agreements must continue.

[Qallab] We are now approaching an Arab summit conference. Are you optimistic about a possible serious stand by the Arabs on your side?

['Arafat] I am one of those who worked for such an Arab summit and some Arab leaders have done their best to hold such a conference. The idea of such a summit first emerged at the tripartite summit held in Cairo. It was confirmed at the al-'Aqabah tripartite summit...and the idea crystallized at the Damascus tripartite summit of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria.

[Qallab] Why were these tripartite summits not turned into five-way summits?

['Arafat] That will happen in the future, God willing. The intentions are there and the circumstances now require that many of the elements of the past should now be overcome.

[Qallab] What do you expect the Arabs to do about the peace process, whether in relation to the Palestinian track or the Lebanese and Syrian tracks?

['Arafat] The statement issued by the Damascus tripartite summit specified everything. I refer you to the text of that statement.

[Qallab] Our question, to be specific, is this: Will the coming summit conference link normalization with Israel to progress in the peace process?

['Arafat] Certainly. The resolution of the summit will definitely influence the Islamic, African, European, and American positions.

[Qallab] Has an agenda been prepared for that summit?

['Arafat] There is an initial idea regarding the main issues to be discussed. The custom has been that when the Arab leaders meet, their agenda is left open so that they can discuss all urgent Arab issues.

[Qallab] Some people believe the summit is a reaction to Netanyahu's victory while others see it as the Arab gateway to the 21st century. What do you say?

['Arafat] I say it is a beginning, a good and important beginning for the restoration of Arab solidarity, and it is a blessed move to enable our Arab nation to meet the challenges of the next century so that the new world order is not at the expense of our children and future generations.

[Qallab] Do you expect the Arabs to take an advanced step and announce the opening of embassies for their states in the territory of the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] in support of the idea you are contemplating, of declaring an independent state?

['Arafat] There is no problem in that regard. We are in contact with several fraternal states in this connection.

[Qallab] Does this mean there is no urgency on your part regarding that matter?

['Arafat] We do not press our brothers. We know that every Arab state has its own circumstances, and we respect and take these circumstances into consideration. We proceed on the basis that it is better for everything to take place at the appropriate time.

[Qallab] The economic situation is a constant headache for you. Do you expect anything in this connection from the forthcoming Arab summit conference?

['Arafat] We attach much importance to our Arab brothers in this connection. It is perhaps one's duty to say that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not been stingy in its continuous aid before and after the establishment of the National Authority, and the same applies to sister Egypt, the Sultanate of Oman, and the United Arab Emirates [UAE].

Some circumstances may emerge which affect Arabs' commitments to their Palestinian brothers. We understand such circumstances, but generally speaking, all the Arab brothers usually honor their commitments to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause.

[Qallab] We always sense that there is some kind of "difficulty" in Jordanian-Palestinian relations. After your successive meetings with the Jordanian monarch, can we now say that these relations have reached the shores of safety?

['Arafat] Relations between us and our Jordanian brothers are indeed special, for many reasons which you know. As far as the current phase is concerned, some Israeli circles and parties are trying to undermine these relations and to drive a wedge between Jordan and the PNA.

The statements which certain Israeli parties have been repeatedly making, especially recently, are the cause of the "difficulty" you speak of, but I am sure that my brothers in Jordan headed by His Majesty King Husayn will foil these attempts behind which lie sinister intentions against us all.

[Qallab] Now that the two tripartite summit conferences have brought you and King Husayn together, can one say that the situation is fine?

['Arafat] Yes. And we — King Husayn and I — have been constantly in contact, before and after these two summits.

[Qallab] Can we reassure the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples that all the conflicts and differences are gone, never to return?

['Arafat] Yes, and I firmly believe this will be manifested increasingly in the coming Arab meetings.

[Qallab] On your own initiative, a human rights commission was formed after the establishment of the PNA. What happened to make that commission appear to stand against you?

['Arafat] It is not true that the Palestinian Human Rights Commission is now in confrontation with the National Authority. All there is to it is that some members of that commission are not performing their task in the appropriate and required manner. Instead of addressing the negative aspects and rectifying the march with objective criticism, they are trying to destroy and harm the experiment with gross exaggeration in their attacks on it, portraying it as something that it is not. I believe this only serves foreign designs meant to portray the Palestinian people as people who do not deserve an independent state.

[Qallab] Why have you detained Dr. Iyad al-Sarraj again? Is that not considered a violation of human rights?

['Arafat] I did not detain Dr. Iyad al-Sarraj. The Palestinian judiciary did. Because we want our judiciary to be independent, I have committed myself to noninterference in that matter this time, bearing in mind that I did intervene for his release the previous time.

[Qallab] But there is an international uproar regarding that matter.

['Arafat] That matter has been given much more attention than it deserves. That person broke the law. When someone breaks the law, no power on earth can save him from the sword of justice. No state in the world would accept violation of its laws on foreign instigation.

[Qallab] But do you not believe that these things distort the image of the newborn Palestinian entity?

['Arafat] Yes, that is exactly the intended aim. What happened in this connection has nothing to do with human rights. Furthermore, how can the world ask me to be firm with the extremists in defense of law and order then reject such firmness when the matter concerns certain circles which are trying, with premeditation and determination, to distort the Palestinian march? We are now busy building our desired state on firm foundations and therefore will not allow violation of law and order to preempt the building of such a state.

[Qallab] Will you bring Iyad al-Sarraj to trial?

['Arafat] Actually, I was the one who appointed that person to the Human Rights Commission. Now that he has broken law and order, the matter of bringing him to trial is up to the judiciary.

[Qallab] What is Iyad al-Sarraj's "crime" this time?

['Arafat] You should address that question not to me but to the Palestinian attorney general who ordered his arrest for what he considered to be good reason.

[Qallab] Iyad al-Sarraj has been detained repeatedly.

['Arafat] Why are you asking me all these questions? Does the matter deserve all these questions?

[Qallab] These are not my questions. They are questions asked by the public.

['Arafat] Please do not waste my time with such questions. You can go to the Palestinian attorney general who ordered his arrest and address your questions to him.

[Qallab] Are you satisfied with the Palestinian experiment in the exercise of democracy?

['Arafat] Our experiment over this short period of time is not ideal, and I am not fully satisfied with it, but we are at the beginning of the road and have faced exceptional and extremely difficult circumstances. I hope we will lay the foundations of a sound democratic experiment that would be an example to be followed in our entire region.

[Qallab] When you were in Beirut you raised the slogan of "democracy of gun law." We now notice that you cannot tolerate some positions taken by the Palestinian Legislative Council.

['Arafat] I believe you got the wrong impression, very much so. As far as I am concerned, the Legislative Council is a sacred body even if it does not agree with me. It is entitled to its own views, different as they may be from the views of the cabinet and its members. I respect that.

The Legislative Council is an independent authority and it is sacred.

[Qallab] Are you satisfied with the work of the Legislative Council?

['Arafat] Certainly, even if it did not share my view. That council was chosen by the Palestinian people just as I was. I respect the will of my people even when positions different from mine and views different from mine emerge. Our experiment in this connection is new. You know that members of some well-established parliaments in the world do not hesitate even to exchange punches and hurl abuse at each other when they disagree, but we have not reached that point despite the fact that our nascent experiment is still at the beginning of the road.

I am proud that representatives of the Palestinian people do not hesitate even to stand up to me when they have convictions different from mine. That makes me happy and assures me that we are on the right track.

[Qallab] Is the headache of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad over?

['Arafat] Not at all. That headache is continuing.

[Qallab] Why?

['Arafat] Because certain foreign circles continue to interfere in our internal affairs.

[Qallab] By foreign circles do you mean Iran?

['Arafat] Iran in the first degree.

[Qallab] And is that why you met with Mas'ud Rajavi, the Iranian president in exile, in retaliation?

['Arafat] No, not at all. Relations between us and Mojahedin-e Khalq are very old, dating back to the days of the shah of Iran and the period before Khomeyni's revolution. I have known Mas'ud Rajavi for a long time. At some stage before the Khomeyni revolution he was in contact with us, just like some senior Iranian officials in positions of power now, who were Fatah members.

[Qallab] What happened to the Islamic National Salvation party which was considered to represent the moderate wing of Hamas? Did that experiment fail?

['Arafat] Not at all. I believe that you know that there are eight Hamas members in the Legislative Council.

[Qallab] Do they represent Hamas officially?

['Arafat] Not officially, but they are leading members of Hamas and, in practice, they do represent that movement even if they claim otherwise.

[Qallab] We have noticed that the suicide operations trend had receded even before the recent Israeli elections. Do you still expect such operations?

['Arafat] Anyone who shoulders the responsibilities of the cause of any people must take every possibility into consideration. I still take into consideration the possibility of some suicide operations occurring.

[Qallab] What is the position of the Damascus-based factions?

['Arafat] Some of these factions participated in the recent PNC session, such as the Popular Front [for the Liberation of Palestine, PFLP], the Democratic Front [for the Liberation of Palestine], some wings of the Ahmad Jibril group [PFLP-General Command], and al-Sa'iqah.

I believe that it is now just a matter of time before the issue of these factions is finally resolved. We seek to strengthen our national unity regardless of the various views and political positions.

[Qallab] When will we see you in Damascus again?

['Arafat] I am in constant contact with my brothers in Damascus and I highly respect President Hafiz al-Asad with whom I have strong and deep links of friendship. I expect to meet him in the near future.

[Qallab] When will we see you in Damascus?

['Arafat] Damascus is in the heart. It is not far from us. When the opportunity comes I will not hesitate to go there.

[Qallab] Can we say that the forthcoming summit will restore normal relations between you and President al-Asad?

['Arafat] I hope and wish so, and I work for it.

[Qallab] Do you expect it?

['Arafat] Yes, I do expect it.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Authority Wants To Amend Economic Deal

JN1406195896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 14 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat said the National Authority is now seeking a quick amendment to the economic agreement signed with Israel with the aim of rescinding the unfair provisions in this agreement. The president said the invitation he received today from the EU general commissioner to take part in the EU's meetings reflects a positive shift in the European position and policy toward Palestine. He noted that French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister John Major told him Palestine is not alone.

The president said that a number of Arabian Gulf states agreed to the entry of all our agricultural products to their markets under the Palestinian label. The president said a decision was made to set up a financial market in the city of Nabulus, in its capacity as the economic capital of Palestine. He said Israel owes $130 million in taxes to the National Authority. The president was speaking in a meeting with the head and members of the Nabulus Chamber of Commerce at Martyr Zafir al-Masri in Nabulus. President 'Arafat said the upcoming Arab summit in Cairo will restore the Arab nation's balance under the new world order. He noted that we are facing the challenge of whether we can continue to stand on our feet against the Israeli blockade. He urged national unity and uniting ranks to face the current challenges. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Releases Hamas Shaykh as 'Conciliation' Move

TA1606095796 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 16 Jun 96 p 15

[Report by Roni Shaqed]

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Arafat is cultivating ties with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. The negotiations between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas, which were discontinued in the wake of a wave of terrorist attacks, will soon be resumed. PA sources have announced that the PA will soon start releasing Hamas- affiliated political prisoners detained following the bombings in Jerusalem and on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv.

In an unusual move designed to display his intentions, Yasir 'Arafat arrived last Friday at the Nabulus police station where Shaykh Jamal Mansur, member of the Hamas command, was being held. 'Arafat ordered the man released, after which the two left together to attend Friday prayers at a mosque in downtown Nabulus.

Shaykh Jamal Mansur is an old-time Hamas member who participated in the PLO-Hamas negotiations that sought to promote understanding and cooperation. He was incarcerated about 80 days ago, but was held at the Nabulus police station rather than in jail owing to his prominent position. The shaykh's release and the PA figures' promise to free members of the Hamas political leadership were steps in an attempt to promote PA-Hamas conciliation in the wake of the Likud victory in the elections.

Defense establishment sources estimate that the Likud victory will expedite the PA-Hamas negotiations. They believe that if Netanyahu adopts what Palestinians perceive as a hard-line policy, 'Arafat will take a passive stance toward any terrorist attacks Hamas carries out on Israeli and Israeli-controlled territory. It should be noted that the PA has not condemned the murder of Beni Yaron and Efrat Unger. At a meeting held over the weekend, many PA council members called on 'Arafat to release the Hamas detainees and resume negotiations with the leaders of the organization. Hamas leaders have also called for renewed talks with the PA as part of the effort to enhance national unity vis-a-vis the Netanyahu government.

Reports on a collaboration agreement between Hamas and Fatah's al-Shabibah organization were published last week, but they have been meanwhile denied by Fatah. The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam squads, the Hamas military arm, issued a leaflet calling for cooperation and renewed negotiations with the PA, stressing at the same time that Hamas will not give up its armed struggle against "Israeli occupation wherever it still exists, and inside the Green Line."

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's 'Abbas Says Israel 'Must Comply' With Accords

JN1706151996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu-Mazin, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, said that the general outlines of the Israeli Government reported by the media fully conflict with the peace process and its bases. He added that Israel should comply with the agreements it concluded with the PLO under international sponsorship, stressing that the Palestinian people and leadership are committed to all these agreements. 'Abbas said he wonders what will be discussed at the final status negotiations now that the new Israeli Government is stressing it will continue to occupy Jerusalem and build settlements and that it rejects the repatriation of Palestinian refugees.

In a statement to Voice of Palestine, Abu-Mazin said that in two telephone calls Dore Gold, Binyamin Netanyahu's adviser, stressed the new Israeli prime minister's commitment to the peace process. He added that once the government is formed, a team will be formed to negotiate with the Palestinians.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Aide Reports Moves To Boost Talks Among Factions

MM1406121096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Jun 96 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Sakhr Habash: Fatah Committee To Lead Dialogue With All Factions, Including Hamas and Jihad" — quotation marks as published]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — A Palestinian official has stressed that the Palestinian people are moving toward building a strong Palestinian national stand to confront all future possibilities, and this requires field action to strengthen relations among PLO factions and the other factions such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. He described the two movements' orientations as positive, which has reinforced and strengthened the Palestinian National Authority's [PNA] position in these circumstances.

Sakhr Habash, member of the Fatah Central Committee, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that reinforcing national unity is the Palestinian leadership's main preoccupation these days. He added that Palestinian dealings with the Netanyahu government — no matter how difficult — require that we reinforce Palestinian national stands and strengthen Fatah in the homeland, and this required a serious stand by the Central Committee, prompting the formation of a committee for emergencies under brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat]. It includes members from the Central Committee and the Fatah-Revolutionary Council."

Habash pointed out that the committee in question is working to strengthen struggle relations among the various PLO factions, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad Movement. And the extensive efforts made by this committee have borne fruit and reinforced the Palestinian national line." He said most Hamas members living in the homeland have spontaneously responded to these efforts because they are aware of the importance of coordination and joint action away from any orientations from outside the homeland.

He said extensive meetings have been held between Fatah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad over the past few days, resulting in the strengthening and reinforcing of the PNA's position in the face of all circumstances and possibilities at the Palestinian, Arab, and regional levels.

Habash said the recent Palestine National Council meetings in Gaza represented a national safety belt, because they opened the door to coordination to reinforce national unity. The Arab tendency to safeguard Jerusalem and its Arab identity, in addition to the call for achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace without allowing the Zionist state to single out individual Arab states, have reinforced Palestinian national unity.

The Palestinian official said that as far as the Palestinians are concerned, the slogan of the upcoming Arab summit is: Jerusalem is the key to peace, Palestinian peace is the essence of Arab peace, and Arab interests lie in not allowing foreigners to blackmail Arabs and Muslims.

He believes all the Arab states participating in the upcoming summit meeting will support the Palestinian people's national rights, and that the Palestinian position at the summit is summed up in the following: The Palestinian leadership is seeking to complete the peace process in the region on all the tracks, namely the Palestinian track, the Syrian track, and the Lebanese track, on the basis of the land-for-peace principle and the U.S. letters of assurances to the Arab parties.

He said "the necessary start to our serious engagement in the final status negotiations with the Israelis is for the Netanyahu government to complete the implementation of Palestinian rights, namely the transitional phase agreements, first and foremost redeployment in Hebron, the detainees' release, and the implementation of all the transitional-phase commitments."

Palestinian Affairs: Mosad Said Planning To Assasinate Palestinians Abroad

TA1606100796 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 13 Jun 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Mu'in Wafa'i]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nicosia, QUDS PRESS — A reliably informed Palestinian source has said that prominent Palestinian opposition figures have been warned by regional and international quarters that they are the targets of assassination attempts by the Israeli Mosad within the settling of accounts that Israel intends to conduct in the coming months in a bid to smash the groups opposing the peace process — groups which are responsible for the series of recent attacks against Israel.

In a statement to QUDS PRESS, the source, who previously worked in the PLO security apparatus and who preferred to remain anonymous, affirmed that several dormant groups that used to work for Israel in at least four Arab and European countries have been located. The source said that members of these groups were activated recently and were asked to move toward specific targets in order to keep watch and collect information on them and, perhaps, eliminate them in the future.

The source explained that the Mosad, which is now headed by General Dani Yatom, Shim'on Peres' military adviser, recently began utilizing a number of Arab informers who had worked for it in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the years of occupation. They have been sent abroad on special missions to infiltrate into the ranks of Palestinian communities in some countries where Palestinian opposition organizations are believed to be active.

The source said some of these informers' names have fallen into the hands of some Arab and European security agencies. He pointed out that a security struggle is currently being waged indirectly between Israelis and Palestinians abroad. It is feared that this struggle will turn into a war of liquidations if Israel assassinates certain Palestinian figures.

According to identical reports, the security and intelligence services in more than one Arab country near Israel have in recent weeks exchanged information about Israeli attempts to plant agents in those countries. The source says some of the agents who were dispatched to these countries entered with forged passports and are now being kept under surveillance. The source said he does not rule out the possibility that Arab capitals will soon announce the capture of Israeli espionage networks. He stressed that the Israeli infiltration attempts are currently concentrated on Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Jordan, Britain, and Iran.

Palestinian Affairs: Awqaf Official Condemns Jewish Prayers at Mosque

JN1506193296 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 15 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs condemned the permission granted to Jews to perform their religious prayers and rites at the holy al-Aqsa Mosque, as reported by Israeli sources.

Ministry Under Secretary Shaykh Yusuf Salamah said that any decision in this regard is not a prerogative of the Israeli authorities, for God ordained that the mosque belongs to the Muslim community. He added that all courtyards, domes, and outdoor stone benches of the mosque are an exclusive Muslim endowment.

Shaykh Salamah expressed his strong amazement and condemnation of this Israeli decision, which was made at a time when the Israeli authorities are denying Palestinians access to the holy al-Aqsa Mosque, the first qibla and second holiest shrine. Shaykh Salamah added that allowing non-Muslims to perform prayers at the mosque is unacceptable and undermines the peace process. He urged Muslim residents of Jerusalem and everyone who can have access to this holy shrine to persevere in the performance of prayers at it. [video unmonitorable]

Palestinian Affairs: Christopher Praise for Netanyahu Seen as 'Inept'

TA1606082596 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM TIMES in English 14 Jun 96 p 4

[Editorial: "Inept Move"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, has turned to the Arab world, to warn them against closing the doors on the peace process. What is the significance of this American statement when all know that the Arab world as a whole has opted for peacemaking as a strategy and the recent Damascus Conference between three major parties in the region, Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, has fully endorsed this?

There can only be one answer to the conundrum. Having shown itself patently in favor of the Labor candidate, outgoing Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, the Clinton administration has begun to adjust itself to the new political reality in Israel, and, in an election year, is seeking to curry favor among American-Jewish voters by evincing full support for Israel, regardless of who is at the helm or what his politics are.

This would explain why, in a most inept way, Christopher has tried to present the Israeli Prime Minister elect, Binyamin Netanyahu, as a man interested in peace moves, and Arab politics as an obstacle in his way. Otherwise why should he have urged the Arabs to give Netanyahu the opportunity to prove his commitment to peace.

There could be a second answer to the strange political behavior of the U.S. In a tangled way, the U.S. could be reacting against the Damascus Conference which, by Arab standards, turned out to be a historic event since it succeeded in thawing out inter-Arab relations, stagnant and in a state of tension since the Gulf Crisis of 1990-1. A conference that succeeds in galvanizing the entire Arab world and in convincing it to join an all-Arab summit to discuss the future of the peace process, may not be altogether to the liking of the U.S. which is more comfortable with a divided Arab world. The prospect of a united Arab world that might fail to take U.S. interests into account may have prompted the Christopher statement, a most awkward way to draw red lines.

If the U.S. is warning the Arabs to refrain from deviating from the pursuit of peace, they are addressing the wrong party. This message were better delivered to Binyamin Netanyahu, the winner of the Israeli elections. They have produced a government which has not ruled out negotiations, but is in essence rejecting the land for peace equation, the very basis of the peace process. Its declared political program is far from encouraging: no to the Palestinian state; no compromise on Jerusalem; no return of the Golan Heights.

In contrast, the Damascus Conference, and the Arab Summit to take place in Cairo at the end of next week, June 21-23, have a common aim: to dispel the storm clouds produced by the results of the Israeli elections.

To ensure the continuation of the peace process is what Arab leaders have on their minds. Those who hear the sound of distant war drums, however muffled, should cock their ears in the direction of the Likud party and its coalition partners.

Algeria

Algeria: President Zeroual Receives Iraqi Foreign Minister

LD1706132696 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Zeroual this morning received Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf. [passage omitted] After the meeting, the Iraqi foreign minister made the following statement:

[Begin al-Sahhaf recording] I have had the honour of meeting with President Liamine Zeroual. It was a great honour for me and the Iraqi delegation accompanying me. I have conveyed a verbal message from President Saddam Husayn to President Zeroual, his dear brother, concerning Iraq's relations with Algeria. It also expressed gratitude and high appreciation for the stance adopted by Algeria and the fraternal Algerian people towards Iraq, a brave stance towards their brothers in Iraq who are suffering from the siege. I have also briefed the president on Iraq's interpretations of a number of Arab and international issues which I had already discussed with Foreign Minister Attaf. It was clear that Iraq's and Algeria's viewpoints are similar regarding a number of issues, particularly those pertaining to bringing Arab ranks together, clearing the inter-Arab atmosphere, and reaching an inter-Arab solidarity for the good of all. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Algeria: Iraqi Foreign Minister 'Happy' With Zeroual Meeting

JN1706161696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1355 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algiers, 17 Jun (INA)—Algerian President Liamine Zeroual today received Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf.

In a press statement after the meeting, Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf said: At the start of the meeting, I conveyed an verbal message from President Saddam Husayn to his brother President Liamine Zeroual, expressing gratitude and great appreciation for the stand that Algeria and its people have taken toward their brothers in Iraq who are suffering from the embargo. I also briefed President Zeroual on Iraq's position on various Arab and international issues.

Al-Sahhaf said he was happy with the outcome of the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Algerian Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmed Attaf, members of the delegation accompanying the foreign minister, Iraq's Ambassador to Algeria 'Abd-al-Karim Mahmud al-Mulla, and Algeria's ambassador in Baghdad.

Algeria: Visiting Iraqi Minister on Foreign Relations, Oil-for-Food Deal

LD1706220296 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi Foreign Minister Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf held a news conference at El Mithak residence. In it, he touched upon a number of Arab and international topics, including Iraq's negotiations with the United Nations on the so-called oil-for-food deal and the role of the UN's inspection team, as well as the future of inter-Arab cooperation. More details with our reporter Cherif Maamri:

[Maamri] In his news conference, Mr. Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf described his meetings and talks with Algerian officials as excellent and positive, as well as an opportunity to boost the two countries' cooperation in the industrial, trade, agricultural, scientific, cultural, and parliamentarian spheres.

However, when journalists' questions focused on Iraq's foreign relations, the latest development inside Iraq itself came to the fore.

As far as the UN's inspection team for Iraq's weapons is concerned, the minister accused the UN inspectors in charge of disarmament of being under the influence of the American and British intelligence services and of making unsubstantiated claims. On this matter the Iraqi Government asked the Security Council to put an end to their provocative actions, he affirmed.

[Begin Sahhaf recording] It has now become clear that Iraq no longer has any of the weapons banned under Resolution 687 and that Iraq's military factories to produce these weapons are no longer able to do so. Some of these factories were destroyed and others were deprived of the equipment and the machinery necessary for the manufacture of such weapons. [end recording]

As far as the oil-for-food deal is concerned, Sahhaf said Baghdad accepted this deal. He reiterated, however, that this should not be construed as a green light to infringe upon his country's sovereignty or harm its economy. Iraq, he added, had rejected all [attempts] to meddle in its internal affairs.

[Begin Sahhaf recording] We reached recently a memorandum of understanding [with the United Nations]. It is this memorandum that should be implemented and not Resolution 986. We removed from this memorandum the unjust and unwarranted stipulations of Resolution 986, which undermined Iraq's sovereignty. We reached a reasonable and suitable compromise which respects Iraq's sovereignty. [end recording]

As far as the Middle East region is concerned, when answering a question on whether the election of a right-wing government would have a negative effect on Arab-Israeli relations, the Iraqi minister reiterated that the interests of the Arab countries should not depend upon the electoral triumph or failure of any Israeli political affiliation.

Mr. Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf concluded his news conference by asserting that Iraq, which had managed to remain steadfast for six years in the face of the imposed blockade, pressures, and foreign provocations, was now trying tirelessly to establish dialogue with all parties to regain its international positions. As far as Iraq is concerned, the future is more important than the past, Sahhaf asserted.

Algeria: 18 Wounded in Bomb Explosion at Boufarik Stadium

LD1706185896 Paris Radio France International in French 1830 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening a bomb exploded in a soccer stadium in Boufarik, 25 km southwest of Algiers, wounding at least 18 people, Reuters news agency reported, quoting eyewitness accounts. The bomb was hidden in a water treatment plant. It was made from acetylene. Six policemen were among the 18 people wounded. The explosion occurred during a football match between Boufarik and Blida, between 1500 and 1600 hours.

Algeria: Daily Reports Kasbah Official Assassinated 13 Jun

LD1706184296 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Algeria, an official of the Algiers Kasbah was shot dead along with another member of his family last Thursday [13 June]. The news is reported today by the daily, EL MOUDJAHID.

Algeria: Court Passes Death Sentences for Terrorism in Absentia

LD1706143196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Criminal Court in Medea held an extraordinary session yesterday and passed 23 death sentences in absentia, said the communications office of the court. At the same session, the court also passed various jail sentences against the defendants, and acquitted 11 of them. The main accusations levelled against the defendants were: Affiliation in an armed criminal group that sabotaged and set fire to public enterprises, helping an armed group, and failing to inform the police about wanted persons.

Algeria: FIS European Supporters Issue Newsletter

MS1706132696 Southall THE ENLIGHTENMENT in English 20 May 96

[Newsletter "publicizing the Islamic Struggle in Algeria," published by Islamic Salvation Front "supporters in Europe"; received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

Political freedom and let the people freely chose!

Praise be to Allah, If the causes of the fiasco of the Algerian post-independence were to be summarised in one factor, it will undoubtedly be the incompatibility of imported models to the reality of the Algerian people and Algerian society. If technics in every field including social management can safely be transposed from one society to another, it is however, not the case for philosophical concepts behind every mode of social development. These later emanate from as far deep as the "collective conscience" where the notion of "Good" and "Bad" resides. If the humanity shares a great deal in common in defining what is "Good" and what is "Bad", there are still plenty of aesthetic differences between cultures. If for example, a given culture happen to strongly believe and cherish the concept of race supremacy and was strong enough to derive and implement a model of development based on that unjust concept, this can lead to a prosperity through slavery for example. And there will be no problem for a common element of that society to enslave and ill-threat other people with the satisfaction of doing "Good". That kind of society may function because the model chosen suits their common beliefs. But what would happen if that model is to be transposed to another society which culture repulses racial discrimination? Say, in a second society a group of managers in power, are blindly fascinated by the accomplished prosperity of the first and decide to import "clefs en main" (keys in hands) the first model of development. It will not work, no matter how much force and propaganda the team in power uses, the society will not follow. The society will either "resign" or function on its own way while those in power try to follow by "patching" the imported model through "half solutions" or, look for another model to import "clef en mains" be it diametrally opposite to the first one. The longer the team in power try to hold onto the status quo, the further behind the society will fall in the nations "running up competition".

Despite what the propaganda of those who do not stand a chance competing with the Islamists, what is called "political Islam" has always existed in every society within the Ummah during peace and war. Yesterday, "the political Islam" functions were the demand of social rights as given by Islam and the protection of the Ummah against external military aggression even when rulers decided to run away from their responsibilities as the regency of Algiers did in 1830. Today and following its time, "political Islam" has come with specific solutions to the multidimensional crisis the Ummah is suffering from. These solutions do not contradict the Islamic notion of "Good" and "Bad" as others imported "ready made solutions" in some cases do. The variety of Islamic models do learn from other societies experiences, do import technics, adapt them, update them and improve them if possible but in any cases they are all build up on the Islamic conception of Justice and all have the human factor at their epicentre.

At a time when the Ummah has not much left to lose as it has become the mockery of the nations, some regimes who have difficulties to get ride of their addiction to power given the very long time habit, are using extreme force and violence to prevent the Islamists addressing the society. This is the situation today. It is so even if the people give their preference to Islamic parties over the rest as in the case of Algeria.

For a country like Algeria, Islamic solutions are the future and dictatorship belongs to the dark past. There exist no more than two options for that country. A just solution or an endless war with or without a proper media coverage. For those who want to bury the FIS alive they better know that time is working for its advantage. Looking at only the economics factors, one can conclude that the regime is more in need of the opposition than the other way around. Indeed analysis forecast that the military regime in Algeria will not be able to sustain the financial crisis beyond 1998 when the burden of the debt service will rise again and the regime will show its incapacity of delivering the "structural adjustment" fruits impatiently waited for.

A political battle is taking place in Algeria between the supporters of an "unjust short term solution" who are trying to secure more guaranties for perpetuating the status quo and the supporters of "political freedom and let the people freely chose".

The "Non-truth" of Lt-Gen Nezzar or the beginning of recent Algerian History falsification!

There are situations where the more one tries to hide things that have happened, the more one will be revealing, to the astonishment of the people who did not know, that bad things did happen to that extend. The "spokesman" of the pushiests responsible for the ongoing bloodbath in Algeria, Lt-General Nezzar is such a case.

Lt-General Nezzar in a long revelation published by two Algerian newspapers last week, gave his own account of what has happened during the period preceding the decision which has thrown Algeria in the tragic unknown of today. Lt-General Nezzar was the Defence Minister, the most important key actor in the coup d'Etat of january 1992 and the military Generals pushiests "frontliner". Lt-General Nezzar has made very serious allegations and accusations that need to be clarified by concerned people for the sake of putting facts right and in accordance with the Algerian people absolute right to know who were the "players behind the scene" and who did what and what were the motivations which triggered the decision taken on that tragic and unforgettable day of 11 January 1992.

The Lt-General Nezzar's stories as related by some news agencies, is build on allegations and accusations that involves other people who may be guilty or innocent. Following are some of these revelations and comments: Lt-General Nezzar starts by revealing the existence of an "intelligence" based report established by a "working committee" from the defence ministry and which has roughly concluded that an FIS victory in the legislative elections of December 91 will throw Algeria into the medieval age. Those who still have a good memory, will recall one particular thing that the FIS has done and which was directly derived from the Islamic teaching: The FIS has selected as candidates, the most educated and able people who were locally known for their integrity. Does the "report" means that if, say an FIS medical doctor has become a health minister, then there would have been a risk that he would forbid the use of modern medicines and decreet the exclusive use of herbs and talismans on the pretext of saving hard currency for Algeria? Or does it mean that an FIS nuclear physics professor becoming a minister of energy would forbid the use of all sort of energy except wood fire and camels attraction?...

Qualitatively speaking, the FIS has presented the best as candidates for the legislative elections. This was a part of the reason of its overwhelming victory. A victory that would have pushed Algeria only forward! "Intelligence report" in the exclusive hands of unelected "restricted club" can be very devastating and at times catastrophic if some of the basic data are purposely feed by "external" sources. The case of president Saddat halting the advance of the Egyptian army past the "Bar Leev" line during the 1973 war and the false "green light", Saddam was made to see, for him to invade Kuwait are few examples amongst many. Returning to Algeria many observers still recall the "immense" interest the late French President Mitterand had for Algeria. President Mitterand has a reputation of having the tendency to "swim in opposed direction of the natural flow of History" as his wrong evaluation of the unification of Germany and the situation in Rwanda has shown more recently. History in Algeria was saying "building a future for Algeria from her real roots". Mitterand was saying "no Islamic state in the "further" Bosnia!". Indeed a "wrong" intelligence report can lead to a major wrong decision. On this chapter the military regime is using the same technics against its opposition (without exception) trying to directly or indirectly, feed them with a wrong evaluation of the situation in order to make them take "the wrong political step at the wrong time". It must be said it did superbly scored on some occasions.

At the end of the day, no matter how biased the authors of an "intelligence report" may be, it is those who act upon it that are most accountable. Nevertheless, the Algerian people have the right to know the conclusions of the above report and to ask for a designated independent inquiring team to look at it fully. Lt General Nezzar said as the election results became known, President Chadli on his third meeting with him (which denotes the intense activity and agitation within some of the military high command), announced that he is resigning and handing its constitutional power to the Army.

It is important to recall that the rules of the game at that time (1991) and as they were clearly stipulated in the constitution of 1989, said that in case of the president resignation, the president of the parliament should assume office and presidential elections should be held within 40 days! Algeria is not a kingdom and president Chadli was not a King in authority to give his thrown to whom he likes, be it very senior officers in the Algerian Army! He must respect the constitution for which he has given the oath to respect in front of the nation. The trick was to force or forge (and this is very serious matter) an antedated resignation of the then president of parliament. This latter was informed by the "magicians" of the "constitutional council" that he has in fact resigned ten days before President Chadli and a constitutional vacuum was induced and which could only be fulfilled by the "State council" of which Lt-General Nezzar was a member if not at the origin of its institution. The only possible answer a person like the parliamentary president can give is "thank you for letting me now that I have resigned ten day ago because I did not know it before!". This is another important question the Algerian people should hear an answer from the concerned people : "When did the parliament president really resigned?".

One must open a bracket here. When Lt-General Nezzar was appointed defence minister, Algeria was proud to have become one of the very few (if any) countries in Africa and the Middle East to have someone in charge of the Army without being in charge of the whole institutions. Many thought that the "Janizary" tradition of getting to the supreme magistrature from the military barracks only, was for ever gone. What a mistake! On this, one can recall what the old Tunisian leader Bourguiba, who was right for once when talking about his prime minister General Ben Ali who overthrow him in a palace coup d'etat. He said: "the proper place for a military man is in the barracks and for once I made a mistake of letting one of them (Ben Ali) out, look what he has done to me!".The probable condition put by General Zeroual to come back through the "defence ministry's door" is without doubt another illustration that the "Janizary tradition" is still well preserved in that part of the world. Lt General Nezzar behaved as a leader should have by taking full personal responsibility in the name of the army high command when he said that the decision to stope the electoral process was taken by the "State council". By this, he has dragged the other members who were civilians and represented different interest of the Nomenklatura. He was however careful to project a very clean image of President Chadli saying that the president insisted that no violent option should be taken. This may hide the fact that the departure of president Chadli did not occur without a proper contract between him and the army officers in charge. President Chadli should now give his version of the events to the Algerian people to know. More than 70 000 Algerian dead, involves many many more families, friends and Justice seekers! As for the other members of the "state council" one can hardly say that they are "innocent until proven guilty", following Lt-General Nezzar "revelations". Lt-General Nezzar accuses members of the then FLN of having favoured the victory of the "Islamism" by imposing a bad electoral system. For a political party like the FLN to play "politics" within the rules of the law is not only normal it is its "raison d'etre". However, if Lt-General knows of any wrong doings, from a law angle, that were perpetrated by FLN members, it becomes an obligation for him to speak up. Again, the Algerian people need and have an absolute right to know as they have been endlessly told that "No one is above the law"! Now, when Lt-General Nezzar talks about "Islamism" and subject related to it, he can hardly hide the fact that he is against the Islamic movement in Algeria. This is however, his "right" to like or hate the Islamic project. But this "right" should not in any circumstance "weights" more than the single vote, citizen Nezzar

Khaled is entitled to and which should be equal to any other Algerian's political right. Not more! Not less!

Lt-General started to erect his and some of his colleagues personal political opinions as some kind of a "State strategy of survival", since the attack of Guemare military barracks in 1990. The FIS had nothing to do with that attack and it was not a part of its strategy whatsoever. On the contrary! On that occasion Lt-General overstepped his prerogatives as a defence minister by making a public declaration implicitly proclaiming the beginning of hostility between the army high command and the FIS. The case of Guemare should have been left to those in charge, that is: the then interior minister and his direct boss, president Chadli. Guemare was not "Amgala one" nor "two". And from that day on, it became hard to hide the "eradication" doctrine the army was pushed to embark upon. Finally, Lt-General Nezzar gave his own reading about the popular uprising of the 5th October 1988. It is a cynical paternalism to declare that the Algerian people were not after freedom and they were kind of dragged like sheep by some members of the FLN political bureau. Lt-General Nezzar may be right in accusing some parties of having triggered the uprising but JUST TRIGGERED! [as published] The "political" and social climate in Algeria during the summer of 1988 was explosive and waiting for a spark...any spark! One could only hear "Rayha Atnoud" which is a typical Algerian expression to say "the revolt is coming". Looking at the nature of targets hit by the youngsters during the uprising of October 1988 leads to the irrevocable conclusion that its was a gesture of rejection of the past as only State properties and the FLN party infrastructures were deliberate targeted. Where does Lt-General Nezzar see the conspiracy between the FLN political bureau members and the revolted youngsters or any leadership of the first on that movement?! Lt-General Nezzar reading of the October uprising lacks of realism. This may be due to his long military carrier which may have separated him from the Algerian people to whom he came to know only through intelligence reports of a doubtful accurate analysis. He is however right in asking for an inquiry (which one hopes independent) and so are the Algerian people when they ask about another one (independent also) to look at what has really happened in the corridors of power which "gave birth" to the monstrous situation of today. As for General Zeroual, he seems to be cultivating the idea that he has inherited a situation of which he has no responsibility. It is some kind of optional for him to correct injustice in every domain political, economical, social and cultural which was caused by the coup d'Etat of January 1992. Talking about building a "future for Algeria" on the top of this level of Injustice is like putting make up on an actively infected wound saying:"the wound looks gone, then it must have gone so there will be no fever and no reaction"! The first step of any healing process is to face with courage "how the "accident" really happened?"! Algeria needs to hear from all those involved, what has really happen in that beginning of 1992!

Egypt

Egypt: Al-Baz on Cairo Summit, Israel's 'Obligations'

JN1406201896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1532 GMT 14 Jun 96

[Interview with Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Egyptian Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of President Husni Mubarak's office, by Muna Salim in Cairo; date not given; from the "Week's Event" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Salim] Dr. Usamah, the Cairo summit will be held in the wake of the recent developments in the region, particularly in Israel, and following the victory of the Likud and the fears accompanying this victory in light of the Likud's stands. Can we say this summit will address a specific message to the new Israeli Government? If the answer is yes, what are the contents of the message?

[Al-Baz] We are not afraid of the assumption of power by a new government in Israel. You used the word fears. However, this raises questions about the new policy the new Israeli Government and leadership will adopt. We do not base our stand on fears or panic over Israel. Israel cannot determine the future of the region or the peace process. Israel is just one party that assumes certain responsibilities regardless of the kind of government in it. We want first to see the Israeli Government formed, and to know its policy, whether through official statements by the persons who are authorized to officially speak in the name of the government, or through its actions and practices. We should first learn the policy it will pursue regarding the implementation of the agreements that were signed with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian leadership; and second, regarding sincere action and without procrastination on the other two tracks, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. As Arabs, we want to safeguard peace, and we do care about maintaining this process because this is in the interest of all parties. It is in the interest of Arabs, Israel, and the whole world. We want to safeguard the peace process, we want to protect peace from danger, and we do not want the extremist trends to triumph, because they will bring the region back to the era of tension. At the very least, they will take the region back to the state of no-peace and no-war. It is a state that exhausts all of our resources, not only natural resources, but also human resources. We expect Israel to cooperate with us to complete peace steps. We also expect the Israeli people to play their role. We also want to address a message to the parties whom we consider our partners, particularly the United States and Russia in their capacity as the peace cosponsors; and the other friendly countries, the European countries that will hold a summit in the Italian city of Florence at the same time of the Arab summit, and the friendly states participating in the summit of the seven industrialized states on 27-28 June. Israel is not the only side we address because there are other concerned parties. Israel is directly concerned, and it has obligations to fulfill. We will not use threats now. There is nothing to necessitate this. As I said, we are not in a state of panic.

[Salim] Dr. Usamah, some Arab states that began to establish normal trade relations with Israel said they will suspend such relations in case the Likud continues the hardline policy that was declared during the election campaign. For example, one of these states is Qatar. Will the Cairo summit discuss the normalization issue?

[Al-Baz] Normalization is an Israel expression. We should not make the mistake of using it. We are committed to the establishment of peaceful relations. Israel should fulfill its obligations: withdrawal from all of the occupied Arab territories — the occupied Arab territories are known — without exception. Israel should respect the Palestinian people's legitimate national rights, meaning the political rights, namely, the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. These are inalienable rights. Israel should do this. If it fulfills its obligations, we will fulfill our obligations. If Israel does not fulfill its obligations, this will render all Arab states unable to continue their contacts and relations with Israel. I mean the Arab states that are not neighbors to Israel because these states want their relations with Israel to be positive. If it becomes clear through official actions, policies, and statements by the new Israeli Government, after it is formed, and after an official spokesman is appointed, that these statements are negative, this will necessarily discourage the Arab states, governments, and peoples from establishing relations, contacts, and cooperation with Israel.

Egypt: Al-Baz Responds to Netanyahu Remarks on Cairo Summit

NC1606185896 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Cairo, where an expanded Arab summit will convene at the end of this week, there has been a cool response to Binyamin Netanyahu's warnings that the summit might have a negative impact. Dr. Usamah al-Baz, the Egyptian president's adviser on political affairs, gave an exclusive interview to our correspondent Tariq al-Shami. He declared that Netanyahu's remarks are an unacceptable threat.

[Begin recording] [Al-Baz] We do not determine our positions on the basis of what Netanyahu or anyone else says. Netanyahu leads a small state with a population of 5 million, a lonely state lying in the middle of a large Arab milieu. Such a state cannot threaten us, deter us, or determine our course of action. It can only tell us: We wish to live in peace. Let every party act in accordance with its size. If the Israelis are annoyed, there is no justification for their annoyance, because we have not adopted any policies contrary to the peace option. The Arab countries are committed to peace as a strategic objective, now and in the future.

[Al-Shami] Dr. Usamah, some people in the U.S. Congress have been saying that Egypt is seeking to form a united Arab front against Israel and to press for a halt in the normalization process with it. What is your response?

[Al-Baz] Such statements are the ravings of posturing ignoramuses. To those in Israel, some of its sycophants in the United States and elsewhere, and other ignorant nonentities who say that Egypt will form an Arab front to halt normalization with Israel, we say: Why would we halt normalization? To give Israel an excuse not to continue the peace process? Our onslaught [hajmatuna] is an onslaught of peace. We wish to confront Israel with its responsibilities and demand that it fulfill its commitments without setting preconditions or trying to change the points of reference according to which the negotiations are being held. The negotiations are not being conducted in a vacuum, you know. [end recording]

Egypt: Interior Minister, Aides Discuss Summit Security Plans

NC1506163796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1515 GMT 15 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jun (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi held a meeting today with his aides to discuss the arrangements his Ministry is making for the Arab summit, which President Husni Mubarak called for and is slated for Saturday 22 June.

The interior minister and his aides discussed the security plans for the conference and for the attending delegations—from the moment they arrive until they leave. The minister decided to establish a central operations room to be in contact with operations' rooms at the delegations' places of residence and the conference venue. It would also be in touch with members as they are being transported between the locations.

They also discussed traffic plans with the objective of facilitating the flow of traffic during the conference and easing the movements of the participating delegations.

The interior minister and his aides also discussed the current security situation's political and criminal aspects so as to evaluate security performance, the positive aspects of implementing it, and negative aspects of handling it.

The interior minister asked his aides to continue mobilizing their forces and to keep them fully alert, as well as studying the requirements for ensuring that the security plan will be implemented during the conference.

The minister ordered security chiefs to form a committee of his security aides, officials from the state security department, and police specialized in training, tasked with holding meetings with security officials on the Republic level to set out a unified plan for protecting all the governorates during the summit and confronting any attempts at ruining the peace.

Egypt: Al-Alfi—Security Arrangements for Arab Summit Finalized

NC1606152796 Cairo MENA in English 1506 GMT 16 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 16 Jun (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi, asserting that all security arrangements for the Saturday-Sunday [22-23 June] Arab summit here have been finalized, pointed out that Egyptian security agencies have demonstrated their high efficiency during scores of such events held in Egypt.

In statements on the fringe of the sessions of the conference of national organs for drug-combating in Africa, al-Alfi said the convocation of the Arab summit testifies to Egypt's pioneer role in the region and in the field of international cooperation.

Egypt: U.S. Congressman's Remarks on Summit Assailed

NC1806083596 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 14 Jun 96 pp 1, 3

[Column by Jalal Duwaydar: "Does Ignorance Enlighten, Mr. Lantos?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I received a provocative and upsetting dispatch yesterday from my colleague Maha 'Abd-al-Fattah, the chief of AL-AKHBAR's bureau in Washington, on a session of the Foreign Relations' hearing committee at the U.S. House of Representatives attended by Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau. After reading the dispatch, which contained information about a rather strange discussion, it became clear to me that some U.S. representatives are out of touch with events in the Middle East. This means their viewpoint on many issues is characterized by ignorance. The really sad part is that their stances, in many cases, are based on what the members of the Zionist Jewish lobby tell them without any consideration for the interests of the American people or the interests of the Israeli people themselves.

The protagonist in the farcical play that was the session was representative Tom Lantos, who reveals through his unreasonable discussions and speeches that he is a member of the Likud Party, not a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. He accused Egypt of operating against U.S. policy by calling for an Arab summit in Cairo. He said he is very upset by President Mubarak's moves since the Israeli elections and his efforts to restore Arab solidarity. He described this as action directed against his beloved Israel. He added that he is surprised by this Arab consensus against the State of Israel.

He said: It is important for Egypt to understand that most of us here in Congress, maybe the majority of the U.S. people, know this Arab summit is directed against Israel. The representative demanded that the new Israeli prime minister be given a chance to form his government and define its program. Lantos concluded his speech by attacking Egypt's relations with Libya. He said he believes Egypt supports al-Qadhdhafi's terrorist policy.

What this U.S. representative and others who defend Israel without thinking or without restriction ought to learn is that Egypt is a country with a free will, and that all the Arab countries have absolute freedom to make the decisions that they believe serve their national and pan-Arab interests. I wonder how U.S. representative Lantos' intelligence concluded that this Arab summit, the first to take place in six years, because of Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait, is directed against Israel.

It seems that Lantos did not read President Mubarak's announcement of the call for this summit — to rescue peace. Does this misinformation spread by the representative at the U.S. House of Representatives' hearing committee mean the Arab countries should take no action along the way of peace, which is being threatened by the extremist policies and statements made by Likud leaders daily? Or does he want to force us to accept the "angelic" peace Israel wants so that it can expand its territories at the expense of democratic Israel, according to his statement? Does he want us to applaud it while it assassinates legitimate Arab rights on a daily basis?

Where was this representative when Israel rejected the UN Security Council resolutions, declared its insistence on occupying Arab land, and stepped up its indiscriminate measures in the occupied Palestinian territories, measures that are only increasing the suffering of the Palestinian people?

Where was this representative during Israel's barbaric aggression against Lebanon and its people, and the destruction, killing, and homelessness this caused thousands of people? Why have we not heard any comments from Lantos, the U.S. representative — I am not saying Israeli — about Likud leader Netanyahu's no's, which contained statements on a refusal to withdraw from the Golan Heights, rejection of a Palestinian state, and refusal to withdraw from East Jerusalem? These are all points that contradict the UN resolutions and its principles, which are based on not occupying others' land by force. This policy also goes against the Madrid conference formula to realize peace in the Middle East, for which the United States was the major sponsor. Where was he when Likud's Netanyahu declared that he refuses to accept the settlement on the basis of land for peace? This prompted the U.S. State Department spokesman a few days ago to declare Washington's adherence and commitment to this principle through its role as a partner in the peace process.

I am concerned that I should have to tell Lantos that his statement before the hearing committee pleased the enemies of peace in Israel and angered the Arab nation's peoples, who are seeking a fair and comprehensive peace. Lantos must understand — if he is ready to do so — that what President Mubarak says and works for reflects the feelings of the Egyptian and Arab man on the street and that Egypt's efforts, establishing peace with Israel 17 years ago, have never stopped in backing the peace process to achieve security and stability for all the peoples of the Middle East, not peace the Israeli way, which is based on aggression, expansion, and the occupation of land.

America and its congressmen, such as Lantos, must know the real feelings of the Arab peoples, who aspire to peace and reject aggression and its effects. Lantos' annoyance with the Cairo summit reveals that the divisions and fragmentation that have befallen the Arab nation are a conspiratorial scheme aimed at destroying it and eliminating it and its identity. This will prompt all the Arab leaders and peoples to cling more to their unity and be more determined to enhance their cohesion and solidarity.

What comforts us regarding the deliberations of the U.S. House of Representatives International Relations Committee is the existence of some sober voices in the U.S. Administration that understand the political situation in the Middle East despite the pressure of the Jewish lobby, which grows fierce every time the U.S. elections draw near. The reply by Robert Pelletreau, the U.S. assistant secretary of state, to Lantos was positive and rational and showed full understanding of the realities in the Middle East, including Egypt's policy. He said that U.S. contacts with the Arab countries focused on the importance of keeping doors open and not making judgments on Netanyahu's government policy before it is defined. Pelletreau noted that the Israeli prime minister-elect wanted to contact President Mubarak. He also noted that he believes that arrangements are under way for direct consultations soon. Pelletreau further noted two prevailing trends in Israel: One encouraging a negative approach and casting doubts and one supporting continuing the peace process and implementing the obligations outlined in the peace agreements, which the United States must emphasize and support.

Discussing Egypt's relations with Libya, Pelletreau stressed that there is no evidence that Egypt violated the sanctions passed by the Security Council. He said that Washington should consider the long border between Egypt and Libya, that Washington benefited from relations between Cairo and Tripoli to convey its concern about reports on the manufacture of chemical material in the Tarhunah area in Libya, and that the U.S. Administration was happy about Egypt's efforts on this issue.

We wish with all our hearts that the United States will lean toward fairness in dealing with Middle East issues, fairness that will preserve the interests of the American people with all the region's countries. This is not a call against the very close friendship between Washington and Tel Aviv but for work for security and permanent stability in this strategic and sensitive region.

Egypt: Commentary—Summit Response to Challenges, Not Likud Rule

NC1506160996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 15 Jun 96

[Commentary by Ahmad al-Qasir: "The Planned Arab Summit Will Determine the Future of Collective Arab Action"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is wrong to imagine that a comprehensive Arab summit in Cairo a few days from now is a mere Arab demonstration against Likud rule in Israel or is solely a transient outburst of enthusiasm that will soon dissipate. The planned Arab summit, called for by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, is indeed a historical necessity dictated by the circumstances through which the Arab nation is passing, the magnitude of the challenges it is facing, and the regional and international changes confronting it. Hence we can confidently declare that the Arab nation's future, indeed the future of collective Arab action, will largely depend on the summit's success.

The convening of a plenary Arab summit after many years was not the product of a passing burst of emotion nor was the groundwork for it laid overnight. It was the result of intensive efforts by President Husni Mubarak in coordination with other Arab leaders. The immediate and unanimous Arab response to Mubarak's invitation is proof of the Arabs' sense of responsibility and their new earnestness to carry out collective Arab action that will restore the Arab nation's equilibrium and its political influence in the region and beyond.

Since, as we have shown above, the issue is connected with the future of an entire nation surrounded by threats and opponents who have designs on it, it is our duty to make good preparations to ensure that the summit succeeds. Egypt, in coordination with other Arab capitals and the Arab League, is doing this right now. It is trying to draw up a specific agenda that will leave no room for the discussion of marginal issues. The main objective is to rally the Arab rank, develop a united Arab stance that will successfully deal with every regional and international change, and impose the challenge of a just peace on Israel's new government, a peace founded on the land-for-peace principle. Israel must not be permitted to carry out any maneuvers to gain time and impose new faits accomplis.

The Arab nation today faces a difficult test that it must successfully overcome, bearing in mind the following important facts. The first is illustrated by the daily hardline statements by Israel's new rulers seeking to extricate themselves from the peace process, obstruct it, or bury it. This includes their remarks about the need to find new points of reference other than those agreed upon at the Madrid conference in late 1991 and the subsequent international agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. This attitude must be confronted by a firm Arab stance.

Second, Netanyahu has proclaimed his new three no's: no to Jerusalem, no to dismantling the settlements, no to a Palestinian state. What results can be expected, then, from the impending and decisive permanent status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians?

Additionally there has been an Israeli retraction from the decision to evacuate the city of Hebron. This makes it necessary to adopt a unified Arab stance to back the Palestinian negotiators in the stage ahead, particularly as no breakthroughs are to be expected on the other Arab negotiating tracks unless success is first achieved on the Palestinian-Israeli track, this being the cornerstone of the peace process.

Third, you must be vigilant to Israel's future diplomatic moves. We expect Israel to launch numerous test balloons to measure Arab resolve, particularly as it can manipulate the time factor skillfully. To frustrate the Arabs and cause them despair, Israel will try to procrastinate until after the U.S. presidential elections. Nor is the recent Israeli-Turkish military cooperation alliance far from our minds. We are aware of its serious repercussions for the Arab region.

Fourth, we must obtain international support for current Arab moves to strike some sort of balance and protect the peace process. The EU, China, and Japan, with significant political and economic influence, can exert great pressure on Israel in addition to the two peace sponsors, Washington and Moscow.

We repeat: We face a hard test. Will the Arab leaders rise to the level of their historic responsibilities and fulfill their nation's hopes?

The next few days will bring the answer.

Egypt: Al-Alfi Calls Muslim Brotherhood Root Cause of Terrorism

NC1506065296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0510 GMT 15 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Jun (MENA)—Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has said that the names of the terrorists who committed the attack against Greek tourists at the Europa Hotel in the pyramids area will be announced shortly.

In an interview with AKHBAR AL-YAWM published today, the interior minister explained that the security forces had earlier set up an ambush for these terrorists, during which two of the terrorists were killed and the weapons used in the crimes seized.

According to al-Alfi, the criminology labroatory has established that the captured weapons were the ones used in the hotel attack.

Al-Alfi added that the security agencies have reliable information on the terrorists' criminal moves. He remarked that an incident here or there does not mean that terrorist organizations are powerful or that they can justify their existence. The important thing is to corner the masterminds and overcome them, he said.

The Egyptian interior minister said that the dissolved Muslim Brotherhood organization is the root cause in all this. It is a 70-year-old organization with roots going back a long way in Egypt, he said, adding that this organization has sought, and still seeks, to gain power by any means, legal or illegal. Thank God, they have failed, because the conscious masses know that this organization uses religion as a front to pursue old dreams, the interior minister said.

He added that all the other terrorist organizations have branched off from the Muslim Brotherhood, which embraces the theory of getting to power over the community's dead body.

Asked about reports by human right organizations about excesses inside Egyptian prisons, al-Alfi replied: Human rights organizations have become the fashion these days. They are used by several bodies to influence communities and people, but all of them have political goals known to all. They are financed by many entities pursuing goals known to all.

Where were these organizations when terrorist crimes were being committed every day against security men and tourists, al-Alfi asked.

He added: We do not heed the allegations levelled at us in this connection. He asserted that the Egyptian legal system deals with any excesses and calls to account those responsible for them. Moreover, he added, an office attached to the public prosecutor investigates any complaints in this connection.

Egypt: Coptic Pope on Extremism, Terrorism, Peace With Israel

NC1406142096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1155 GMT 14 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 14 Jun (MENA)—Pope Shanudah III, the pope of Alexandria and patriarch of the Coptic community, praised President Husni Mubarak's policies and efforts. He said that President Mubarak exerts efforts to establish security, stability, and democracy in Egypt and works on combating extremism and violence, whose dangers have been contained after their leaders and amirs were annihilated in Egypt. Pope Shanudah described his relations with president Mubarak and the Egyptian political leadership as truly excellent.

In this regard, he affirmed his support for Mubarak's stances to combat terrorism, violence, and extremism since these constitute a danger not only to Christians, but Muslims as well.

He said that most martyrs who have fallen as a result of acts of violence have been Muslims, whether from among the political leadership or policemen. These people were not negligent in confronting this terrorism.

In a television interview in Lebanon today, Pope Shanudah clarified that the extremism of some religious movements and groups is a temporary phenomenon. It is not restricted to Egypt alone, but to eastern countries in general. He added that it will end soon, after the leaders and followers of these movements are terminated.

Pope Shanudah said that if these people want to participate in the government, they cannot do so by violence and killing innocent people and committing ugly crimes in the name of religion. He said that Egypt is a democratic country that believes in elections as a method for participation.

Pope Shanudah praised the upcoming Arab leaders' summit in Cairo. He said that if this summit restores to Arabs their unity and solidarity, they will become a force with great influence on the peace process. It will also preserve the Arabs' dignity. He expressed his hopes that the summit will issue resolutions that realize pan-Arab objectives.

He said real peace in the region will not be achieved unless Israel withdrawals from all the Arab territories in the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon and supports the establishment of the Palestinian state. In this regard, he ruled out the possibility that normalization of Arab-Israeli relations will take place before these firm facts are realized.

He said that the idea of internationalizing Jerusalem will continue to be opposed, because doing so would mean abandoning the Arab identity of this holy city.

Pope Shanudah said: We are not comfortable with what is being proposed now about internationalizing Jerusalem. He pointed out that this matter, which will be discussed during the Beirut conference meeting today, requires discussion from all countries and presentation of various opinions to reach a formula for a solution between Muslims and Christians.

Pope Shanudah added that he has not declared that he is opposed to recognizing Israel, but that there are conditions attached to this recognition for peace to be established. These conditions are that Israel should accept full withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, the establishment of a Palestinian state, and a resolution of the Jerusalem problem.

Pope Shanudah ruled out the possibility that peace will be realized soon. He said he cannot imagine Israel changing its ideas so easily and that the peace process might take some time.

Regarding the policies of the Likud government under Netanyahu, Pope Shanudah said what we care about is Israeli policy, not that of the ruling party. He clarified that he does not make a distinction between Labor and Likud, because Israel wants to implement what it wants, irrespective of peace in the region.

He pointed out that most massacres committed by Israel recently were during the Labor Party's rule, such as the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, the Qana massacre, and the expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories in Palestine.

He said that the Lebanese Resistance against the Israeli occupation is legitimate until full Israeli withdrawal from the Lebanese territories takes place. He confirmed that the Israeli security strip occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon will not give Israel the peace it wants. This peace can only be realized through good-neighborliness and implementation of Resolution 425 on withdrawal from Lebanese territories.

Sudan

Sudan: National Democratic Alliance Delegation Tours South

AB1406144396 London BBC World Service in English 0630 GMT 14 Jun 96

[From the "Network Africa" program hosted by Rick Wells]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Sudanese Government in Khartoum pulled off one of its biggest coups against the SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] rebels fighting in the south of the country when two of the southern rebel factions signed a peace deal in Khartoum in April. Divide and rule has been a persistent tactic of the Khartoum government. It is often being accused of stirring up traditional enmities between the Arab tribes such as the (Resegartin) and the (al-Misariah) that live in the southern provinces alongside the Dinka who make up the bulk of the SPLA support.

Well, in order to try to counter that, the National Democratic Alliance, a coalition of Sudanese opposition groups based in Cairo, currently has a delegation in southern Sudan headed by their secretary general, (Sayyid Mubarak al-Haral al-Madhi). On the line from SPLA territory in northern Bahr al-Ghazal Province last night, I asked him how people were responding to their efforts:

[Begin recording] [(Al-Mahdi)] They have reacted very positively, and as a matter of fact, we have started that effort five years ago and it has been going on. The government has been trying to disturb it by sending people to kill some of the Dinka's delegates, and then some delegations [are] trying to incite trouble between the tribes. So, we are here to review the situation and to cement the peace between the tribes, and we managed to have big meetings — joint meetings with the three tribes together, and the response was very positive from all sides.

[Wells] But it has to be said that in a way the government has only been exacerbating or worsening problems that have existed in this area between these people for many, many years — centuries even.

[(Al-Mahdi)] Yes. Well, actually the government has been trying to use religion and ethnical differences in order to have the Arab tribes fight its own battle for it. They know that those Arab tribes do not support the NIF [National Islamic Front]; they are supporters of the Ummah party which is in the opposition, and they thought that it is convenient for them to get these people to fight each other and the beneficiary would be the NIF — by killing both sides and spoiling [the] relationship between them.

[Wells] Could you ever imagine the Arab tribes there being.... [Wells pauses] in a way joining up with the SPLA, joining in the fight against the government in Khartoum?

[(Al-Mahdi)] Well, that has been possible, and that has actually been happening. There are numbers of those Arabs now members of the SPLA — alternate commanders and officers within the ranks of the SPLA.

[Wells] Is that something that you would actively encourage?

[(Al-Mahdi)] Well, now what we are encouraging is the peaceful coexistence and the living together and the harnessing of interests of both sides, and isolating the government policy in that regard. The issue of hiding the NIF government is a different agenda that we are working at, and there are better locations than fighting it from here. We have better locations near to Khartoum, within hours to Khartoum, than [to] do it from here. [end recording]

Sudan: Communist Party Paper Says 80 Detained in Kobar Prison

EA1506200696 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 0400 GMT 15 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The clandestine AL-MAYDAN bulletin, which is published internally by the Sudanese Communist Party, has reported that more than 80 detainees are still being kept in Kobar main prison. The publication adds that the National Islamic Front's [NIF] government is continuously fabricating excuses to carry out more detentions and fake trails, which do not observe the minimum justice requirements.

The NIF, the paper points out, is still carrying out its strategy of settling scores with political opponents through detentions, torture, harassment, and physical liquidation.

The Sudanese Communist Party's mouthpiece goes on to name some of the detainees, who are being kept in Kobar Prison such as Sirr al-Khatim 'Uthman al-Hajj, popularly known as Sirr Babu, who is a former school teacher, and Awad Bashir, a university graduate. The paper said both men, who have been in detention since 2 September 1995, are being subjected to torture. The detainees also include a Juba-based trader, Masa'ud Badr, and Adarub, who hails from the Beja ethnic group, and has taught in Juba since 1979. They were both arrested on 10 January on the accusation of tuning into the opposition radio, and possessing some opposition literature. [passage omitted]

Bahrain

Bahrain: Car Reportedly Explodes in Manama 17 Jun

NC1706194496 Paris AFP in English 1940 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, June 17 (AFP) - A car parked in a Manama street blew up on Monday [17 June], a government spokesman said, adding that there were no casualties in the blast.

The spokesman said the cause of the explosion was unknown.

"A car parked in a main street in Manama exploded," he told AFP. "It was a weak explosion and bomb experts are trying to find out what caused it.

"It is too early to talk of a car bomb. Police are carrying out investigations on the scene."

Bahrain has been rocked by 18 months of unrest led by Shiite Muslims demanding a restoration of the parliament which the mainly Sunni Muslim authorities suspended in 1975.

At least 22 people have died in the violence.

The government accused Iran earlier this month of financing and training an Islamic militant group that had plotted to overturn Bahrain's rulers.

Bahrain: Newspaper Views Renewed Explosions, Motives

JN1806105596 (Internet) Al-Ayyam WWW in Arabic 18 Jun 96

[Untitled editorial]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is the same miserable picture using the same defeatist methods in a bid to draw attention to a loosing cause. These attempts are like the last cards played by a loosing gambler out of despair and illusions of winning, but to no avail.

Once again explosions take place in a relentless effort to strike at national unity that is manifested these days in its strongest form, and to hit the economy, which remains steadfast and which safely overcomes all obstacles.

All that has happened and that will happen will not undermine our feeling of security anymore and will not raise any fears in us as they hope. Who are they to do this to us?

We know that the tools of the conspiracy receive instructions from abroad to exasperate the situation and to conceal its conspiratorial nature. These outside groups have exposed relations with Tehran. AL-AYYAM earlier furnished evidence of the links of these groups, their headquarters, sources of finance, and movements with Tehran.

It is time to remove fear and horror from our hearts because we allowed these groups to conduct their wrongdoing through our long silence and the submission by some of us to the threats of these terrorist groups which they sent in the forms of messages, graffiti, or telephone calls from unknown callers.

We will not pay any attention to their threats and warnings. Some of us had the courage to declare our positions, while others expressed ideas contrary to their true beliefs because they stopped thinking rationally. They were swayed by their sympathy with these actions which they considered appropriate venues to express their grudges against the country.

Some people refrain from, or evade declaring their position clearly, or in the best cases, they make unclear statements that do not condemn Iran and those who conspire with it against our national unity and entity. Do these people have the right to shed tears over the attempts to undermine national unity? Through their hesitant position or through standing in the background as if the homeland is not theirs, they participate in destabilizing faith in popular unity and integration.

The policy of manipulating the puppets by dark forces is coming to an end, and the conspiracy is facing defeat while we stand as one fold that is stronger and more determined than ever. We raise our voices loudly expressing belief in this homeland, and demanding the maximum penalty against those loosing gamblers who are the victims of themselves in the loosing battle.

Bahrain: Opposition Leader on Situation in Country

JN1806075996 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 17 Jun 96 p 5

[Interview with Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Mahfuz, secretary general of the Bahraini Islamic Opposition Front, by Ahmad Mazhar Sa'du in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Sa'du] We would like to ask you first about the latest political developments in Bahrain.

[Al-Mahfuz] Now that the popular uprising in Bahrain has overcome many challenges from the authority, we are in a sensitive stage. This stage is characterized by the authority's rejection of all demands by the uprising. The uprising was launched to demand the activation of the 1973 Constitution and the revitalization of the parliament and the National Assembly. The popular uprising also demanded the release of prisoners, the return of political exiles and those banned from entering Bahrain, and the employment of jobless people.

We have reached a sensitive stage — the stage of comprehensive political change — which we are trying to entrench. This means the implementation of comprehensive democracy. Nobody is above the law. Therefore, we, together with brothers in the opposition, have found the way to political change. This political change is represented by the comprehensive implementation of democracy, the holding of elections, and the establishment of liberties and political pluralism in Bahrain.

[Sa'du] How are the conditions of detainees in Bahrain? Is there hope they will be released?

[Al-Mahfuz] Reports from the brothers inside reveal that their conditions are very tragic. Some detainees have broken jaws and deep wounds and suffer from very miserable conditions. So far, thousands have been arrested. Some even say there are 10,000 men, women, children, clerics, and intellectuals in Bahraini jails. We have asked for the immediate intervention of human rights organizations. However, the Bahraini authorities are still preventing any responsible international human rights group to enter Bahrain in an attempt to conceal the suffering of those detainees.

[Sa'du] Are there attempts or is there hope to release the detainees?

[Al-Mahfuz] On the contrary, the Bahraini authorities continue to arrest activists. The Bahraini authorities arrested many people 10 days ago in various parts of Bahrain. We do not believe the government intends to release political detainees. The issue has reached a deadlock because the government insists on the security solution.

[Sa'du] Have you asked the Arab Organization on Human Rights or Amnesty International to help in this matter?

[Al-Mahfuz] We spoke with the Arab Organization on Human Rights and Amnesty International, as well as the Anti-Torture Organization based in America and some religious and political figures in Arab and foreign countries. The Bahraini Government, however, turned a deaf ear to all this and did not want to hear anything about the issue.

[Sa'du] Some describe Bahrain's intifadah as a Shiite intifadah which has Iranian connections. What is your reply to this?

[Al-Mahfuz] Perhaps, Shiites are the overwhelming majority in Bahrain. This, however, does not mean that the issue is a sectarian one. This is because the intifadah did not claim the rights of the Shiites but it claimed the rights of the people in Bahrain. The intifadah also talks about justice, freedom, and equality, not as sectarian demands which only concern the Shiites but as issues that concern all the people in Bahrain whether they are Shiites or Sunnis.

It is true that the Shiites are the overwhelming majority in Bahrain. This, however, is not an issue for the Shiites in Bahrain; it is an issue highlighted by the authorities for media consumption to distract attention from the true events in Bahrain.

The Bahraini opposition is not sectarian, and the slogans it raises are not linked to a certain sect, but to the people. We reject this accusation now just as we rejected it before. Moreover, we accuse the government and the authorities of working to foment sectarian seditions. These seditions have so far failed, praise be to God.

[Sa'du] What is the level of coordination between the Islamic Front and other Bahraini opposition factions?

[Al-Mahfuz] Coordination exists, praise be to God. It, however, needs constant promotion. The opposition should promote its way of action, practice, and call for politically changing the existing situation in Bahrain.

I called before, and I still call, on the opposition to rise up to the level of the challenge we are facing in Bahrain. We are facing a government which is very far from democracy, which rules through tribal norms, and which is not willing to make any concessions.

Therefore, I called on the opposition to assume its responsibility and demand a political change that will secure for all citizens in Bahrain, whether Sunnis or Shiites, their full rights within the framework of democracy and public freedoms.

The opposition only discusses the issue of activating the Constitution of 1973. This is actually one of the large differences which we, as opposition, should circumvent. The Bahraini Government lacks democracy and freedom; it does not believe freedom should be given to others.

I thus call on all opposition factions to rise up to a clear political discourse represented by comprehensive democracy and not distorted democracy. I do not believe tribal norms and democracy can converge because they absolutely conflict with each other and antagonize one another.

[Sa'du] Israel attacks the Lebanese people and their heroic resistance from time to time. How do you view the possibility of resisting this continuous aggression against the Lebanese people?

[Al-Mahfuz] During the aggression, I said that the Arab and Islamic nations were humiliated in Qana through the killing of children, women, and the elderly. This could take place in any part of the Arab world. However, the heroic stand of the resistance, praise be to God, has broken the Israeli intransigence. The Qana massacre is proof of the impossibility of normalization with the Zionist enemy. The bombardment was the result of rancor against the Arab nation. Otherwise, what does the killing of a group of people at a UN shelter mean? This was a violation of all humanitarian laws and international legitimacy. Therefore, it proved that normalization with the Israeli enemy is impossible, particularly because of their mentality which is rancorous against mankind, not only against the Arab and Islamic nations.

The massacre occurred at a position belonging to the United Nations, which is supposed to be a representative of the international community. Israel wanted to express that it is against anyone who does not submit to its demands. The resistance is in everyone's conscience and heart. What counts is the stand of the resistance, not what it possesses in terms of capabilities and resources against the huge Israeli war machine which is supported by the United States. What counts is strong will and faith. By this, the resistance can stand fast and triumph. We saw that blood triumphed over the sword in Qana. The confrontation was between the supporters of right and the supporters of tyranny and falsehood represented by Israel. This is why Qana triumphed despite the brutal killing, because it rejected the Israeli occupation and aggression. I believe the issue is not one of capabilities, but of faithful will. Regardless of how tyrannical it might be, any war machine cannot defeat a faithful will.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Foreign Minister Awaits Libya's Reply on al-Qadhdhafi Statement

LD1806100596 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1550 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait City, 17 Jun — Kuwait today said it is still annoyed about the statements made by Libyan President Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, in which he disparaged the country's independence and sovereignty. Kuwait also denied receiving any clarifications from Tripoli which would have helped overcome the negative impact of these statements.

In a statement to reporters at the National Assembly, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said that "Kuwait has not received any official reply from the Libyan Government about these statements." For his part, the acting Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Khalid Jarallah pointed out that Kuwait "reaffirms its discontent and condemnation of these statements" made by Colonel al-Qadhdhafi during his visit to Cairo at the end of May.

In a statement to KUNA, Jarallah said that Kuwait also denounces and deplores "the media campaigns which regrettably continue in the Libyan press and which are an affront to the State of Kuwait and its people."

The statements by Shaykh Sabah and Jarallah came in reply to a statement made by Idriss Dahmani Abu Dib, the Libyan charge d'affaires to Kuwait, to the KUNA yesterday in which he said that "the problem between the two countries has been contained after Kuwaiti officials received, with understanding, clarifications from Libya that have removed the suspicions about the statement made by the brother leader al-Qadhdhafi."

Colonel al-Qadhdhafi has said, in an address to students and lecturers at Cairo University, that "Kuwait should not have obtained its independence because it is incapable of defending itself."

Shaykh Sabah said: "We have replied sufficiently to what was said" by Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, and he added that "there are still relations between Kuwait and Libya."

In a reply to a question whether Kuwait will put forward a request to the Arab summit, due to be held in Cairo next week, that al-Qadhdhafi's statements be discussed, Shaykh Sabah said: "This summit has nothing to do with this matter."

For his part, Jarallah indicated that his meeting with Abu Dib at the Foreign Ministry on 15 June "took place at the request of the Libyan charge d'affaires with a view to presenting al-Qadhdhafi's project regarding Arab union and which will be presented to the forthcoming Arab summit." He added: "During this meeting, we reiterated the discontent of the State of Kuwait and its condemnation of those statements and the media campaigns which regrettably continue in the Libyan press and which are an affront to the state of Kuwait and its people."

Al-Qadhdhafi's statements were met with protest and condemnation by Kuwait which regarded them "as an infringement of its sovereignty and independence and that they damage relations between the two countries." These statements received a similar reaction from many Gulf and Arab states.

The [words indistinct] quickly recalled the Kuwaiti charge d'affaires in Libya for consultations and the Libyan charge d'affaires to Kuwait was also summoned and informed him that it is strongly protesting against these statements.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Explains Hopes for Arab Summit in Cairo

LD1706235996 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2230 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia described Arab summit conferences as expressions of the political desire that the whole world hear the Arab voice united and mutually supportive.

King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, also said that Arab societies are currently passing through developments that make it imperative for us to say yes to rational peace and solidarity and no to war and disunity; to consider the hopes of our peoples and their aspirations for a free and dignified life in the middle of a world fraught with sedition, disturbances, and unrest.

The king renewed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's keen interest in seeing justice, right, good, and peace prevail in the world so that Arab societies achieve their aspirations in social and economic development, which would raise them high on the ladder of progress and prosperity, and there would be no place for whoever seeks to waste and disperse Arab efforts. King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, was speaking at the council of ministers meeting that he chaired yesterday evening at al-Salam Palace in Jeddah.

At the end of the cabinet meeting, His Excellency Dr. Fu'ad Bin 'Abd-al-Salam al-Farisi, minister of information, made a statement to SPA, in which he said: "The beloved king spoke in detail about the hopes pinned on the outcome of the emergency Arab summit due to convene in Cairo on 21 June, expressing the hope of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that the summit will come out with a joint perception of the process of the comprehensive, just, and durable peace in the region, which will commit both the Arab and the Israeli sides to abide by all the resolutions and pledges made toward this peace and epitomize the sincere intentions to continue the march until the end of the road."

Then the custodian of the two holy mosques reviewed the major developments on the regional, Arab, Islamic, and international levels, explaining the position of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia toward these developments and its keen interest that the international community achieve its aspirations in security, peace, and stability. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Ramadan Criticizes 'Zionist-U.S. Plots'

JN1706160696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1410 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 17 Jun (INA)—Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan said Iraq reiterates its readiness to open a new chapter with all Arab countries, without exception, to achieve sound and effective Arab solidarity and to stop the deterioration, subservience, and capitulation, as well as to face the American-Zionist colonialist schemes by adopting a unified and serious pan-Arab position.

Ramadan made these remarks at a large popular gathering held yesterday evening in honor of a Jordanian popular and party delegation that is currently visiting Iraq. National Assembly Speaker Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi also attended the event.

Ramadan said that Iraq's honor and dignity rises high when it rejects subservience to America and the capitulation process, which serves the Zionist scheme. He said that Iraq will continue its struggle to safeguard Arab honor, rights, land, wealth, existence, independence, and sovereignty.

Ramadan stressed that the Iraqis, under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn, will continue to adhere to their national and pan-Arab objectives as the Americans and Zionists escalate their plots against Iraq. He noted that the policies of capitulation and subservience perpetrated by the traitor America's slaves will strengthen the Iraqis' adherence to their principles and make them more determined to fight, as they waged the glorious al-Qadisiyah of Saddam and the historic showdown, the glorious Mother of Battles, in defense of the Arab nation, its freedom, existence, and progress.

Ramadan added that Baghdad will remain the lungs of the free Arabs and the heart that beats with strength and pride. Baghdad, he said, will remain the Arab capital who will embrace the Arab popular forces — parties, trade unions, and popular organizations. Ramadan added that Baghdad has torn up the Arab and international sanctions and foiled the Zionist-American-reactionary plot to separate all the Arabs from the center of Arab strength, Baghdad, the pioneer of Arab awakening and liberation.

Taha Yasin Ramadan asserted that the Arab masses are aware of the dangers of the Zionist-U.S. reactionary plots, that they are stepping up their struggle, and that they are making every effort to expose and confront these plots. Therefore, he said, these plots will be aborted in order to prevent the Zionist and American enemies and their enslaved, treacherous dwarfs from harming the Arab nation.

He said that provocations by the United States and Britain to prolong the blockade will fail as a result of the Iraqis' steadfastness and sacrifices. He asserted that the unjust blockade is eroding. After six years of the economic blockade, Iraq's economy is stronger than ever. A clear victory will be won by the Iraqis, and the enemies and their slaves and allies will be defeated.

The vice president welcomed the visit by the Jordanian national forces and parties, whose support for Iraq is a living example of the stand of the Arab people.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Razzaq al-Hashimi, director of the Foreign Relations Bureau of the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, delivered a speech in which he asserted that the vanguards of the fraternal Jordanian people expressed a deep awareness of the dimensions of the American and Zionist conspiracy against Iraq—a conspiracy that is led by the United States, the symbol of terrorism and crime. He also said that targeting the Ba'th Party's Iraq means targeting Arabism, Islam, and the Arab nation's progress, which has entrenched science, faith, and capability in this country.

Mudfi Humaymat then delivered a speech on behalf of the Jordanian parties, stressing the Jordanian people's support for their Iraqi brothers in the face of the imperialist plots to fragment the Arab rank. He also condemned the continued blockade on the Iraqi people, saying it has lost all its legal and moral justifications. He also denounced the Arab regimes for failing to invite Iraq to the upcoming Arab summit in Cairo.

In a speech delivered on behalf of the members of the Jordanian House of Representatives, Dr. Muhammad 'Uwaydah stressed the House's support for Iraq's territorial integrity and for the Iraqi people's unity, as well as their firm confrontation of all the imperialist attempts to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

'Uwaydah urged the Arab parliamentarians to stand by the Iraqi people and raise their voices in order to end the serious suffering of the great Iraqi people. He asserted that the failure to invite Iraq to the Cairo summit actually honors Iraq's consistent principles, which foil the imperialist and Zionist schemes.

In another speech, the dean of Jordanian lawyers Husayn Mujalli said that the Iraqi people are being subjected to the most hideous aggression in the history of mankind, as well as a U.S.-Zionist attempt to subdue the Arab nation and discount its cultural and humanitarian role and its relationship with other peoples.

Later, Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, secretary general of the Arab Popular Forces Conference, delivered a speech in which he said that this splendid pan-Arab gathering is a continuation of the popular Arab tide generated by the great showdown, the immortal Mother of Battles, led by President Saddam Husayn. This gathering also represents the eternal wager that faithful Arabism is larger and stronger than the alliance of enemies, regardless of their strength, their various conspiracies, or their grudge against the nation of messages and great humanitarian sacrifice.

Mrs. Manal Yunus 'Abd-al-Razzaq, head of the Iraqi Women's General Federation, delivered a speech on behalf of the Iraqi trade unions, organizations, and professional associations. She asserted that Iraq, under President Saddam Husayn, can firmly and courageously foil conspiracies, despite the ongoing unjust blockade.

During the large mass gathering, poems were recited and popular songs were sung. They expressed the deep cohesion among the sons of the one Arab people and their ability to confront challenges while deriving their determination from the principles of the immortal Mother of Battles and its leader, President Saddam Husayn.

The gathering was attended by representatives of the parties that form the National Progressive and Patriotic Front, some comrade members of the Ba'th Party bureaus, members of the National Assembly, and representatives of the Iraqi organizations, trade unions, and professional associations, as well as members of the fraternal Jordanian party and popular delegation.

Iraq: Ekeus' Allegations Termed 'Baseless'

JN1706190896 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1850 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 17 Jun (INA)—Investigations by the competent Iraqi authorities reaffirmed that the allegations by Rolf Ekeus, executive chairman of the UN Special Commission, that Iraqi air defense positions aimed their guns at a Special Commission helicopter flying in the Abu Ghurayb area, are baseless, hasty, and based on inaccurate information.

The text of the results of the investigation — which was ordered by Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz and delivered by Ambassador Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's UN permanent representative, to Security Council President Nabil al-'Arabi today — says that a UN helicopter took off from al-Rashid Air Base at 0800 [0400 GMT] on 14 June 1996, escorted by an Iraqi helicopter, to carry out reconnaissance of an undeclared target in an 80-by-65-km area. There were three Iraqi escorts on board the UN helicopter, including an Iraqi pilot. The Australian head of the Special Commission reconnaissance team was also on the helicopter.

At 0817, the two helicopters arrived at a highway crossroads west of Baghdad, where the Iraqi representative on board the Special Commission plane was told the coordinates of the target, which was the headquarters of the Republican Guard [maqarr 'ayyinat al-haras al-jumhuri]. The Iraqi representative told the head of the team that this position is sensitive and that we do not allow flights over it. The team leader then gave the coordinates of the second target. The team leader was informed that this target is a presidential site. He then decided to return to al-Rashid Air Base, where the helicopter landed at 0940.

At 0945, Smidovich, head of Inspection Team No. 150, phoned Brigadier General Engineer Husam Muhammad Amin, director of National Observation [mudir al-raqabah al-wataniyah], and informed him that antiaircraft guns in the area were directed at the team's helicopter. After checking with the concerned party, it became clear that this allegation is unfounded. Smidovich was informed of this result at 1000.

At 1100, team leader Smidovich informed Brig. Gen. Husam Muhammad Amin that he wanted to fly over the Abu Ghurayb old road to monitor the Republican Guard Headquarters and then to fly over the Republican Guard Self-Propelled Field Artillery Battalion. The request was approved, provided that details of the flight over the two sites would be discussed by the Iraqi officer, the head of the reconnaissance team, and the German chief pilot.

A new flight plan was set, and the helicopters took off at 1200. At 1230, the UN helicopter, accompanied by an Iraqi helicopter, arrived at the second target, the Republican Guard Self-Propelled Field Artillery Battalion, and circled the target for two-and-a-half hours. It then returned to al-Rashid Air Base.

During the long flight, the reconnaissance team head and the chief pilot made no remarks regarding the alleged movement of the guns. The two sides were surprised by this allegation after the helicopter landed at the al-Rashid Air Base.

The results of investigation showed that all the antiaircraft guns had set not to fire by the competent authorities a few minutes before the helicopters took off and remained so until the helicopters returned to the base, in accordance with the standards observed to guarantee the safety of the helicopters and their passengers.

At 1400 during the helicopter's flight, Smidovich, the inspection team leader, contacted Brig. Gen. Eng. Husam Muhammad Amin and informed him that some soldiers had taken up positions at a number of antiaircraft guns and had aimed these guns toward the UN helicopter.

After checking with the concerned party, it became clear that this allegation is unfounded. It was revealed that a number of troops took up positions near their guns when they saw the helicopter. This is an ordinary procedure and was not meant to threaten the UN helicopter or influence its mission.

In fact, the one who reported the alleged incident was an inspector who was close to the gun position near the Republican Guard Headquarters and who informed the team leader of these allegations by radio. It seems that Smidovich, the team leader, understood that the gun position was close to the helicopter at a time when the helicopter was not flying over the antiaircraft weapons.

The investigation concluded that, at 1407, the head of Inspection Team No. 150 was informed that these were standard operations related to air defense and that there was no problem with the UN Special Commission's helicopter, especially since an Iraqi helicopter was escorting the UN helicopter and there were Iraqi escorts in the Special Commission's helicopter.

Brig. Gen. Husam Muhammad Amin explained to Smidovich that no gun had been moved in the direction of the Special Commission's helicopter or in any other direction.

Iraq: Paper Urges Rolf Ekeus To Deal 'Responsibly' With Proposals

JN1806110396 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0850 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Jun (INA) — In an article today, AL-JUMHURIYAH emphasizes Iraq's cooperation with the Special Commission over the past five years, as well as its implementation of its substantive commitments under Resolution 687, especially Section C on banned weapons. The Special Commission has so far not acknowledged Iraq's implementation of its key commitments so that the Security Council will fulfill its reciprocal commitments toward Iraq, primarily implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which means lifting the economic embargo.

The newspaper criticizes the Special Commission's noncompliance with the technical nature of its mission. The Special Commission has deliberately gotten involved in the political game of some parties, especially the United States. The newspaper refers to the fabrication of crises, obstacles, and procrastination to prolong the blockade.

AL-JUMHURIYAH denounces the positions of the United States and Britain, which were behind the issuance of the many unjust resolutions against Iraq, the last being Resolution 1060 and the statement issued by the Security Council on 14 June.

The newspaper urges Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the Special Commission, to deal seriously and responsibly with the Iraqi proposals to remove all the remaining obstacles and end this story. Seeking to prolong the blockade will increase the tragedies caused by the crime of the blockade. Humanity will never forgive those behind this.

Iraq: Daily—UN Inspectors 'Agents' of U.S., British Intelligence

JN1806082896 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0637 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 18 Jun (INA) — In an article today, AL-'IRAQ says UN inspection teams deliberately escalate the situation with Iraq to harm it and to collect information for the United States and Britain. These teams are slyly used by the United States and Britain to maintain the economic blockade against Iraq. Iraq's official agencies have provided tonnes of documents and information about Iraq's weapons programs. Also, thousands of missiles, devices, and pieces of equipment used in the production of weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed.

AL-'IRAQ wonders: After all of this, is it possible for Iraq to hide missiles or other weapons from the United States? Why do certain teams insist on escalating the situation?

The newspaper makes it clear that most inspection teams visit Iraq, conduct inspection tours, and leave without any problems. Sometimes, we don't even know that a UN team is in Iraq. Most of these teams comprise purely technical staff and have no ulterior motives. These teams do their jobs perfectly without facing any obstacles from Iraq. As for the teams that encountered problems and were denied access to certain sites, they are not technical teams, but intelligence teams which came to Iraq under the cover of the inspection teams. The inspectors of these teams are agents of U.S. and British intelligence and other countries that stand to gain.

AL-'IRAQ adds that the mission of those inspectors is different from that of the real teams. Those inspectors want to collect secret information that relates to Iraq's national security, in accordance with a plan prepared in advance at their intelligence headquarters. The purpose of this plan is to collect as much information as possible about specific targets, mostly relating to the Republican Guard, its formations, armament, preparation, and camps. This information is collected while inspecting these sites on the pretext of suspicions about the existence of weapons or documents. The purpose behind this is to collect strategic information that helps in a new large-scale aggressive scheme against Iraq.

The newspaper asserts that Iraq has the right to reject inspection and to ask a neutral committee that comprises the Security Council members and Egypt, which is the president of the current session, to review the allegations of the current inspection teams and verify the contents of these sites beyond any reasonable doubt.

The newspaper concludes that Iraq is not asking for anything other than its right to have the inspection teams set a specific timetable, without deliberate procrastination and delay, and to submit a final, honest report. Also, the requirements fulfilled by Iraq must be declared in a neutral manner and without any external pressures that seek to prolong the blockade against our unyielding Iraqi people.

Iraq: Daily—U.S. Foreign Aid Has 'Malicious' Objectives

JN1806105996 Baghdad INA in English 1025 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, June 17, INA — An Iraqi paper has described the American Administration's philosophy of foreign aid programme for third world countries as a means to fulfill malicious political motives.

In an article issued on Tuesday [18 June], AL-QADISIYAH daily has said this aid is also used to fight the national forces in these countries under the cover of combating terrorism and preventing technology from other peoples under the pretext of non-poliferation weapons.

The daily said the American aid to other countries is a malignant imperialist means to plunder people's wealth and impose its hegemony on them. At the same time, the West with their control on the press media are trying to impose continuous blackout on this fact.

Commenting on an article issued by advisor of the American National Security Council, Anthony Lake, the daily said American foreign aid is not a humanitarian project to help people and develop their capabilities and economies, but it is a capitalism act which earns huge profits for the Americans.

Iraq: Saddam Presides Over 23d Cabinet Session

JN1606204796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 16 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, presided over the 23d session of the Council of Ministers.

His excellency stressed that administrative and field leaders are required to lead renovation and introduce incentives. He said: Leaders must do this in order to raise spirits and involve everyone concerned. This will make workers feel that they are participants and have greater responsibility, which will encourage productivity and innovation. Hence, the importance of a lively relationship between leaders and workers within the framework of the required renovation.

These remarks were made by the leader president during a discussion by the Council of Ministers of his excellency's historic letter of 2 December 1995 and what has been implemented of it, six months later.

In their remarks, the cabinet members indicated that the economic and social aspects of this historic letter that have been implemented and their positive effects on our steadfast people's living conditions and faithful patience show that it is a working plan for economic growth, resisting the unfair blockade, and continuing this growth in the coming phase.

It has been decided that the Council of Ministers will read the message, with the spirit of renovation that it contains, in a subsequent meeting, God willing.

Iraq: Work Reportedly Continuing at Tikrit Presidential Complex

JN1706170596 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our sources learned that construction work at the presidential complex and ministries in Tikrit continues unabated under the direct supervision of the tyrant [Saddam Husayn] and a select Special Security unit.

Our sources said officials at the complex—which is being built on the banks of the Tigris in the Tall 'Abd al-Satih area, outside Tikrit—refuse to employ laborers who have Kurdish or Turkomen origins. Arab workers from al-Jubur tribe are also not allowed on the site.

The sources confirm that several earth ramparts were recently built around the complex after the most of the tyrant's palace and the adjacent presidency building were completed.

The tyrant Saddam ordered the construction of this complex after the Sha'ban [February 1991] uprising. The site will serve as a substitute capital for Baghdad in an emergency.

A previous report by our sources say the complex includes a radio and television station and underground military and security offices and chambers.

Iraq: Opposition Radio Speaks of Purges in Army, Republican Guard

NC1606154396 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 16 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to informed sources in Baghdad, regime authorities carried out extensive purges in the ranks of the Iraqi Army and the Republican Guard in early June.

The weekly newspaper LIWA' AL-SADR cites these sources as saying that 400 officers of various ranks had been executed by the end of the first week of June, including some senior Republican Guard officers.

Earlier reports spoke of widespread arrests and executions in the Iraqi Army's officer ranks, particularly in the al-Mahawil and al-Musayyib camps and the Abu Gharib and al-Taji camps near Baghdad. Forty officers were executed in the earlier purge—ordered directly by Saddam Husayn and supervised by his eldest son, 'Udayy.

The new campaign of executions coincides with the regime's decision to form new military institutions under various names [words indistinct] including the so-called Saddam Fedayeen on which the regime bestowed a legal character through a decision of the National Assembly carried out under Saddam's direct orders.

In this context authoritative sources point out that the regime aims to pave the way for appointing the members of a new command structure that includes senior posts [words indistinct], formally appointing 'Udayy as defense minister.

Iraq: Assembly Speaker Receives Jordanian Parliamentarians

JN1506161896 Baghdad INA in English 1345 GMT 15 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, June 15, INA — Speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly Dr Sa'dun Hammadi received Mr Muhammad 'Uwaydah, Khalil Haddadin, Talal 'Ubaydat, and Salih Sha'watah, members of the Jordanian House of Representatives.

During the meeting, Dr Hammadi reviewed the developments of the relation between Iraq and the U.N Security Council and the contents of the understanding memorandum on oil for food and medicine and other basic materials for the Iraqi people stressing that this memorandum was not an alternative for implementing Para 22 of the Resolution 687 particularly Iraq had implemented all its obligations towards that resolution.

Dr Hammadi stressed Iraq's keenness to consolidate Arab solidarity and to encourage any initiative that ensures means of confronting external challenges aiming at harming the Arabs at present and in future.

The Jordanian representatives expressed their solidarity with the Iraqi leadership and people in order to lift the embargo imposed on Iraq and to consolidate Iraq's heroic steadfastness in confronting the enemies schemes aiming at harming Iraq's sovereignty and national unity .

The meeting was attended by Mr Sa'd Qasim Hammudi chairman of the Arab and International Relations Committee at the Iraqi National Assembly.

Iraq: Speaker Invites Jordanian Counterpart To Visit Baghdad

JN1806122496 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 18 Jun 96 pp 1, 28

[Report by Ahmad 'Abd-al-Majid in Baghdad]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sa'd Qasim Hammudi, head of the Foreign Relations Committee at the Iraqi National Assembly, said Dr. Sa'ddun Hammadi, Speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly, invited the Jordanian House of Representatives speaker and an accompanying delegation to visit Baghdad.

In an exclusive statement to AL-DUSTUR following the meeting between Dr. Hammadi and a group of Jordanian House of Representatives members, who are visiting Iraq within a popular delegation that comprises 74 figures, Hammudi said that the date of the visit was not decided, but that the Iraqi National Assembly welcomes any visit by a Jordanian delegation, and hopes that the visit will be held soon. [passage omitted]

Iraq: 'Abd-al-Ghafur Receives Jordanian Popular Delegation

JN1506150096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1310 GMT 15 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 15 Jun (INA) — 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, member of the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and secretary general of the National Progressive and Patriotic Front, said that Iraq's pan-Arab trend under President Saddam Husayn and its pan-Arab message carry strategic weight for the Arab nation and its masses in the face of Zionist and colonialist schemes and also stand as a model for both Arabism and humanity.

During an expanded political dialogue with the Jordanian popular delegation comprising representatives of Jordanian parties, organizations, and unions, as well as Jordanian parliamentary and political figures, which are now visiting the country, 'Abd-al-Ghafur said that the memorandum of understanding Iraq signed with the United Nations made the first crack in the unjust blockade. He said this should prompt us as parties, popular forces, unions, and militant Arab organizations to enhance pan-Arab action and press for the implementation of Paragraph 22 of Resolution No. 687 in order to lift the entire blockade. He also praised the support the Jordanian people and their political, cultural, and professional forces are extending to Iraq in its battle against the enemies of the Arab nation.

'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur added that Iraq is adopting a positive attitude toward the Security Council's resolutions in order to make the Security Council shoulder its responsibility in accordance with Resolution No. 687 and not to allow the Ekeus-chaired UN Special Commission, which is directly influenced by U.S. intelligence, to take provocative actions and obstruct Security Council member states' efforts to lift the blockade on Iraq.

'Abd-al-Ghafur praised the support our pan-Arab masses in the Arab East and the Arab Maghreb are extending to their brothers in Iraq in the face of the colonialist and Zionist plans to harm cultural progress, which was embodied in the goals and slogans of the historic, eternal Mother of Battles and its national, pan-Arab, and human implications—battles that were fought to defend the pan-Arab causes, build a bright present and future, and achieve pan-Arab goals.

The representatives of the Jordanian parties, organizations, and unions praised the Iraqi people's courageous positions under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn, their genuine pan-Arab positions, and their confrontation of the treacherous U.S. and Zionist military aggression, including the continuation of the unjust blockade.

The large delegation of Jordanian parties, organizations, and figures came to express the support of the Jordanian people and their national, popular, and professional forces for Iraq against the aggression and blockade imposed on it.

Iraq: KDP Says Security Guards Kill 10 at Karkuk Terminal

LD1506091296 Tehran IRNA in English
0738 GMT 15 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, June 15, IRNA — Three persons were killed and seven others wounded as security guards opened fire on people in a passenger terminal in Karkuk, Northern Iraq, reported Radio of Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) on Saturday [15 June]. The incident occured early last week after passengers refused to present their identity cards to the security forces and a number of them managed to flee the scene, the radio monitored here, added.

Karkuk is the largest Kurdish-populated city in Northern Iraq controlled by the central government.

Iraq: PUK, KDP Continue Shelling Each Other in North

LD1506143596 Tehran IRNA in English
1334 GMT 15 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mahabad, W. Azarbaijan Prov., Jun 15 (IRNA) — Forces of Iraq's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) have been shelling positions of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in Shiraneh Region, northern Iraq, in the past three days, reported the KDP radio, monitored here, on Saturday [15 June].

Without giving any detail on casualties, the radio said the KDP forces in retaliation brought PUK bunkers under fire. Sporadic clashes still continue, it added. The two rival groups have been attacking each other's positions during the recent month.

Iraq: Kurdish Party Aide Hails 'Very Positive' Talks With Jordan

MM1806110496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
18 Jun 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "Jordan Tells Kurdish Delegation: No Change in Position Toward Iraq"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London — Amman has stressed to a delegation from the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] (led by Mas'ud Barzani) that Jordan's position toward Iraq has not changed. Hushyar Zibari, member of the Political Bureau, has told AL-HAYAH that he and Muhsin Diza'i, Barzani's special envoy, visited Amman last week, where they met with Crown Prince Hasan and senior state officials and discussed Kurdish-Jordanian relations.

He added that Jordanian officials pointed out to the Kurdish delegation that they had received "numerous requests" from opposition groups seeking to open offices in Jordan, which "does not want" these groups to bring their problems to its territory. The officials stressed that only the major groups will be granted this right. This includes the two main Kurdish parties: the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] (led by Jalal Talabani).

Zibari described the talks held with Jordanian officials on relations with Iraqi Kurds as "very positive." He said that they "stressed" the need to resolve inter-Kurdish disputes and asserted that Amman "is paying careful attention" to the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan. He stressed that the federation question is an Iraqi affair "to be decided by the Iraqis themselves." Concluding, he said that the Jordanians renewed their invitation to Barzani to visit Amman.

As is known, a PUK delegation comprising three leaders visited Amman last month and held talks with senio Jordanian officials.

Israel: Netanyahu Government Presents Basic Guidelines

TA1706192396 Jerusalem Government Press Office in English 17 Jun 96

["Guidelines of the Government of Israel"; communicated by Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu's bureau]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government presented to the Knesset will act on the premise that the fight of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is eternal and indisputable, that the State of Israel is the State of the Jewish people, whose democratic government guarantees equality for all its citizens, and whose main goal is the ingathering and integration of the Jewish people.

The striving for national unity, social justice, and personal liberty, and the search for genuine peace with all of our neighbors while safeguarding national and personal security, shall serve as the basis for the Government's policies.

The Government will work to achieve the following goals.

1. Achieving peace with all our neighbors, while safeguarding national and personal security.

2. Reinforcing the status of Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Jewish people.

3. Increasing immigration to Israel, and integrating new immigrants in all walks of life.

4. Creating conditions for a free, thriving economy and social welfare.

5. Strengthening, broadening and developing settlement in Israel.

6. Promoting values of the State of Israel as a Jewish, democratic state, while maintaining a proper balance between the will of the majority and the rights of individual and minorities.

7. Broadening education and strengthening the bond to Jewish heritage and the realization of Zionism.

I. PEACE, SECURITY AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

1. The Government of Israel will work to broaden the circle of peace with all of its neighbors, for the good of Israel's citizens and the region's inhabitants, while safeguarding Israel's vital interests.

2. The Government will reinforce and develop its peaceful relations with Egypt and Jordan.

3. The Government of Israel will conduct negotiations with Syria withou? pre-conditions.

4. The Government will work to raise the level of relations with other Arab countries which have connections with Israel: Qatar, Oman, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, and will work towards mutual recognition and cooperation with Arab countries with which Israel does not have diplomatic relations.

5. The Government of Israel will use all means at its disposal to bring home the prisoners of war and missing in action and all those who worked for the security of the state, and will insist on this point during negotiations with all relevant parties.

6. The Government will negotiate with the Palestinian Authority, with the intent of reaching a permanent arrangement, on the condition that the Palestinians fulfill all their commitments fully.

7. The Government of Israel will propose to the Palestinians an arrangement whereby they will be able to conduct their lives freely within the framework of self-government. The Government will oppose the establishment of a Palestinian state or any foreign sovereignty west of the Jordan River, and will oppose "the right of return" of Arab populations to any part of the Land of Israel west of the Jordan River.

8. In any political arrangement, Israel shall insist on ensuring the existence and security of Jewish settlements and their affinity with the State of Israel. The Government of Israel will continue to bear full responsibility for the Jewish settlements and their residents.

9. The Government views the Golan Heights as essential to the security of the state and its water resources. Retaining Israeli sovereignty over the Golan will be the basis for an arrangement with Syria.

10. The State of Israel will keep strengthening the Israel Defense Forces and other security forces to deter potential enemies, prevent war and defend the state and its citizens.

11. The Government will exercise its right to use the IDF [Israel Defense Force] and security forces to act against the threat of terrorism everywhere, to ensure the well being of the country's residents and the Jewish people.

12. The Government will act to remove the threat to the northern border and will ensure economic development to residents in the north.

13. The Government's privatization policy will take into account the essential nature of the defense industries to the country's security.

14. The Government will promote Israel's foreign relations to enhance its security and peace, and to further the goal of economic and cultural growth.

15. The Government will nurture its special, close relationship with the United States, on the basis of the commitment of both to the values of liberty, justice, democracy, and the commonality of their interests.

16. The Government will act to strengthen relations with Russia and other CIS states, bearing in mind Russia's status in the international community and the interests shared by Israel and these countries.

17. The Government of Israel will continue efforts to have Israel added as an associate member of the European Union, and will act to strengthen its ties with Europe.

18. The Government will strengthen its relations in all spheres with countries in East Asia, especially economic ties with the fast-developing market in the region.

19. The Government will strive to develop relations with all countries desiring peace and will increase Israel's involvement in international organizations.

20. The Government will initiate and cooperate in international efforts against terrorist organizations and those countries which shelter and aid such organizations.

21. The Government will act with determination against any manifestation of anti-semitism throughout the world, and will work to enhance the ties and mutual responsibility between Israel and Jewish communities in the Diaspora.

II. JERUSALEM

1. Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, is one city, whole and undivided, and will remain forever under Israel's sovereignty.

2. Freedom of worship and access to the holy places will be guaranteed to members of all faiths.

3. The Government will thwart any attempt to undermine the unity of Jerusalem, and will prevent any action which is counter to Israel's exclusive sovereignty over the city.

4. The Government of Israel, through its ministries and through the Jerusalem Municipality, will allocate special resources to speed up building, improve municipal services for Jewish, Arab and other residents, and to reinforce the social and economic status of the Jerusalem metropolitan area.

III. RELIGION AND STATE

1. The Government will act to bring the religious and secular closer through mutual understanding and respect. The Government will retain the status quo on religious matters. Whenever it becomes clear that the status quo was violated, the Government will look into steps to undo the change, including introducing legislation.

2. The Law of Conversion shall be changed so that conversions to Judaism in Israel will be recognized only if approved by the Chief Rabbinate.

3. The Government will initiate research of the history of the Land of Israel and the Jewish People, including archaeological excavation, while preserving the dignity of the dead.

4. The Government will make prayer arrangements for Jews at holy sites in accordance to the guidelines of religious law.

IV. IMMIGRATION AND ABSORPTION

1. Recognizing the shared fate and the joint struggle for the existence of the Jewish people, and to achieve the main goal of the State of Israel — the ingathering of the Jewish people in its homeland — the Government will act with determination to increase immigration from all countries, rescue persecuted Jews, and create social and economic conditions for a speedy and successful integration of immigrants.

2. The Government will put immigration and absorption at the top?X??>Hits priorities in the belief that effective action on its part will turn Israel into a center which will draw immigrants from prosperous and deprived countries alike. The Government will initiate a strategic, long-term program to tap the immigration potential from various countries, estimated at one million immigrants in the coming decade.

3. The Government will work to bridge the gaps between new immigrants and veteran residents, and will create conditions to facilitate their smooth and successful integration into Israeli society. The Government will work through information, education and law enforcement to prevent calumny and slander against immigrant groups or individuals on the basis of their origin, and will deal with manifestations of discrimination or mistreatment of immigrants by the government bureaucracy.

4. The Government will introduce legislation to ensure the rights of immigrants.

5. The Government will work to bring to Israel Ethiopians who wish to immigrate and are eligible under law or government decisions.

V. ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL POLICIES

Va. Economics

1. To stem the continuous dangerous growth in the State budget deficit, the Government will take steps to

decrease the deficit; not by raising taxes, but?by cutting expenditures, and strict budgetary policies. To increase revenues, the Government will significantly expand privatization, including the sale of land, while reducing the Government's involvement in the economy.

2. The Government will act to establish conditions which will provide economic stability, durable growth, the reduction of inflation, and continued structural reforms.

3. The Government will halt the current policies which have created dangerous deficits in the balance of trade and the balance of payments, and will take all necessary steps to reduce them.

4. Israel's economy is small, and dependent on foreign trade. Its successful development is conditioned on specialization in sectors in which it has a relative advantage, and which allows it to produce and export high quality products and services at a competitive price. This requires exposure to world markets and the cancellation of limitations and tariffs, in order to strengthen the economy's ability to compete.

5. The Government will strengthen exposure and liberalization policies in the capital and financial markets, as well as in the labor market.

6. The Government will fight inflation by reducing government expenditures, decreasing the state budget, establishing conditions for increasing productivity, and through appropriate monetary policies.

7. The Government will implement privatization policies and will transfer its control in business enterprises — including statutory authorities and the banks — to the public and to the private sector.

8. The Government will encourage competition in the economy with the goal of allowing consumers to purchase a variety of products and services at competitive prices set by the free market rather than as a result of intervention by government or political party apparatuses.

9. To increase the economic growth, the Government will act to create conditions for the development of small and medium sized enterprises.

10. The Government will do its utmost to restore faith in the capital market, and will encourage increased savings.

11. ?he Government will strengthen government structures and reduce the bureaucracy.

Vb. Social Welfare

1. Development of the economy and growth will facilitate the construction of a strong society, a fair distribution of the tax burden, the creation of new jobs, and an increase in aid to the disadvantaged. The government will act vigorously to reduce poverty through education, employment, and social renewal.

2. The Government will work to create social justice and equal opportunity for all, while recognizing that every person has the right to dignity and quality of life. The Government will strive to create a strong society in Israel, by maintaining balance encouraging private enterprise and government involvement.

3. The Government will — as its first priority — put in place a comprehensive program to solve the housing problems of young couples and large families, to allow them to purchase apartments at reasonable prices. The Government will also work to build rental apartments for young couples and large families in accordance with criteria set by the government.

4. The Government will examine the disposition of Israel's health services and the way in which the National Health Insurance Law has been implemented, as well as its implications. The Government will — through legislation — initiate changes and additions in order to improve health services in Israel.

5. The Government of Israel will significantly promote social welfare and quality of life in development towns and increase efforts to rehabilitate distressed neighborhoods.

6. The Government will improve the welfare of the individual, strive for full employment, and ensure basic living conditions for all citizens.

7. The Government recognizes that priority should be given to senior citizens and recognizes its obligation to improve the quality of life for senior citizens in need in the areas of housing, nursing care, and the granting of benefits and relief in accordance to criteria to be determined.

8. The Government will work to establish pension insurance on a stable actuarial base which will facilitate pension payments at the level required to maintain a suitable standard of living.

9. The Government will implement assistance programs for the handicapped with the goal of giving them suitable living conditions for their rehabilitation and integration into society.

10. The Government will act to aid discharged soldiers in the spheres of higher education, employment and housing.

11. The Government will wage an uncompromising war against the plague of drugs as a national mission of

the utmost importance and will allocate the resources necessary to this end.

Vc. The Fight Against Traffic Accidents

The human, social and economic damage of traffic accidents in Israel is relatively much greater than in other developed countries. Contributing to this are the human component, deficient infrastructures, the absence of complementary inter-urban and urban mass transit, deficient legislation, and partial enforcement of existing laws. The Government will devote special attention to this issue, and will budget all the resources required to decrease the number of accidents.

Vd. Infrastructures

1. The Government will initiate publicly and privately funded projects for investment in physical and human infrastructures in the spheres of transportation, energy and communications, education and research and development, with the aim of creating in Israel the environment necessary for the Israeli economy to join those of the developed countries of the world.

2. The Government will act for the gradual construction of an advanced, wide-band infrastructure between a number of focal points across the country, and will initiate a unification of computer communications networks, currently operated by commercial firms, universities and public bodies, into one network. The national computer communications carrier will be connected to international sites on extensive and fast communications lines.

3. The Government will develop government databases and encourage the establishment of private databases, which together will constitute a national information infrastructure, open to public use through computers.

Ve. The Environment

1. The Government of Israel will raise environmental issues to the top of the national agenda, and act to enhance public consciousness regarding the preservation of the environment as an integral part of the struggle to preserve the country and out of a desire to build in it a healthy and prosperous society of values.

2. The Government of Israel will give priority to preserving the country's natural resources: its water, air, soil, flora and fauna. The Government will initiate basic environmental legislation, in place of and in addition to current regulations.

3. The Government will give high priority to waste recycling projects and to the establishment of waste water purification plants.

4. Government ministries will operate with strict adherence to a policy of preserving green areas as much as possible.

VI. SETTLEMENT

1. Settlement in the Negev, the Galilee, the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, and in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza is of national importance, to Israel's defense and an expression of Zionist fulfillment. The Government will alter the settlement policy, act to consolidate and develop the settlement enterprise in these areas, and allocate the resources necessary for this.

2. The Government of Israel will safeguard its vital water supplies, from water sources on the Golan Heights and in Judaea and Samaria.

3. The Government of Israel will examine the difficulties facing private farms, moshavim and kibbutzim, and propose recovery plans that will allow them to exist as independent economic entities under free market conditions.

4. The Government will uncompromisingly combat all attempts to impair the rights of all residents to exercise their full civil and economic rights, without forced mediation by — or dependence o6 — any union, movement, organization or party.

VIb. Status of Women

1. The Government will create the conditions for the full and equal integration of Israeli women into all areas of life, and will also work to ensure equal opportunities for both genders, in areas of employment and salary. The Government will strive to improve the status of women, and to eradicate all forms of discrimination.

2. The Government will increase aid to single-parent families in need.

3. The Government of Israel will act to achieve genuine representation for women in all decision-making centers in the country.

4. The Government will treat, with special gravity, all forms of violence against women and fight to uproot it. It will act to deepen public awareness of the severity of the problem, and allocate resources to education, information and deterrent activities.

5. The Government will assist women who have been harmed by violence, with the goal of restoring their physical and mental health, reviving their honor, and returning them to full functioning free from threats and fear of violence.

VIc. Quality of Government

1. The Government will act in accordance with the fundamental principles of democratic rule, and respect the status and decisions of the bodies supervising it: the Knesset, the courts, the State Comptroller, and the Attorney-General.

2. The Government will preserve freedom of expression. It recognizes the importance of a fair and balanced media as part of the democratic system.

3. The Government will uphold the law, act with integrity, demonstrate responsible management, and maintain strict efficiency and frugality.

The allocation of resources, subsidies and grants from the State Treasury and holdings will be effected in accordance with reasonable and equal criteria, and will be accompanied by supervision over the activities of beneficiaries according to their commitments and the purposes of the allocation.

4. The Government views its agencies and employees as servants of citizens of the State, with a profound commitment to civil rights, including the right to information and to fair, efficient and polite service. The Government will cultivate these principles among its employees.

5. The Government will promote voluntarism and civilian involvement in governance, and?will instill the values of democracy and good citizenship in the young generation through the education systems.

VId. Minorities

1. The Government will act toward the full integration of minorities in Israel into every area. Special efforts will be made for the advancement of minorities who have joined their fate with that of the Jewish people and theState of Israel, and who have served in the security forces.

2. The Government will act to enlarge the budgets of local Arab authorities which require improved basic infrastructures, in an effort to reduce gaps between them and other communities.

3. Efforts will be made to absorb minority academics, particularly those who have completed military duties in the service of the State, in public institutions, in order to continue their participation in public and official responsibility for the State they served in the security services.

VII. EDUCATION

1. The Government views education as a central factor in shaping the character of the young generation in Israel. It offers momentum for closing gaps and for preventing polarization within society. Education will be grounded in the eternal values of the Jewish tradition, Zionist and Jewish consciousness, and universal values.

2. The Book of Books, the Bible, the Hebrew language, and the history of the Jewish people are the foundation stones of our national identity, and will take their rightful place in the education of the young generation.

3. The education establishment will put an emphasis on offering a general education that will prepare the young generation for the technological world, and give them the tools for humanistic, democratic judgment regarding the society in which they live.

4. An extended school day will be gradually implemented in elementary and secondary schools, and priority will be given to schools in development towns and neighborhoods.

5. The Government will strengthen the youth movements and promote youth participation in such movements, in an effort to strengthen their connection to the country and the State.

6. The Government will create the conditions for cultural and artistic development, within which artists will be able to find expression regardless of their political views.

7. The Government will foster the status of the teacher in Israeli society.

8. The Government will act to promote original Israeli creations in the areas of culture and art.

9. The Government will promote physical education as an important factor in forming the personalities of the young generation.

10. The Government will promote competitive sport as a motivating factor in the active involvement of youths and adults in the various sports, ensuring appropriate economic conditions to enable outstanding athletes to register achievements in international arenas.

Israel: Netanyahu To Visit Egypt, Jordan in Mid-July

TA1706041996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu will visit Egypt and Jordan shortly after his planned visit to the United States, political sources told our political correspondent Shlomo Raz. According to plans, Netanyahu will leave for the United States on 8 July and will visit Egypt a few days later.

Our correspondent adds that after Netanyahu's visits to Egypt and Jordan, Foreign Minister-designate David

Levi also plans to depart for talks in those Arab countries that have established relations with Israel.

Israel: Netanyahu Said Conducting 'KGB-Style' Purge in Likud

TA1706123296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 17 Jun 96 pp 1, 23

[Commentary by Nahum Barne'a: "Bibi and the Shadows"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Judging by what Binyamin Netanyahu said yesterday, he needs a justice minister for two purposes: standing up to the religious parties without causing a breakdown in relations and coping with the increasing power of the Supreme Court.

Netanyah9 stated: I don't want a justice minister who will engage in confrontations with the prime minister. I don't want the kind of relations Rabin had with Liba'i.

These pronouncements are but a fraction of Netanyahu's vision. He would like a cabinet whose justice minister is his personal lawyer, its finance minister his private banker, and its defense minister his aide-de-camp. He would like a cabinet of shadows. However, there is yet another Netanyahu, the one who worries about the slightest shift in public opinion. Last night, following Ehud Olmert's plea, Netanyahu promised to reconsider his appointment of a justice minister.

He could very well discard Ya'aqov Ne'eman at the last minute and recall Dan Meridor, whose services as justice minister he didn't want at all. Or he may discard Ya'aqov Frenkel, his candidate for finance minister, and appoint Meridor instead. Netanyahu is very sensitive to pressure. He is easily pressured. What should concern Israelis, however, is not what limousine Meridor will get but the extent of the political revolution Netanyahu sought to carry out. This revolution is no small matter.

First of all, through the formation of the government, Netanyahu wanted to complete the purging of the Likud. "It was a KGB-style operation," one of the leaders of the Likud said. Likud leaders? If Bibi's purges work out, those words will most probably not mean the same any more. The party will have no leaders, bar one. There will probably be no such party either. What Ben-Gurion failed to achieve after laboring for decades, Bibi managed to do in two weeks.

In the first stage Netanyahu neutralized the Likud's apparatus and branches. The party died. In the second stage he crashed it at the ballot box. In the third stage he pushed it out of the government's top echelon, and in the fourth stage he dwarfed it in the Knesset. According to Bibi's list, the four senior ministers who are scheduled to take the Likud's seats in the government are not his flesh and blood. Not David Levi, who seceded and set up his own party; not Yitzhaq Mordekhay, who showed up at the last minute and committed his political career to Netanyahu; nor Ya'aqov Frenkel or Ya'aqov Ne'eman who became cabinet ministers out of the blue.

Similarly, Netanyahu swept the Likud out of the Knesset's top positions. He assigned the chairmanship of the House Committee, which has always been held by the ruling party, to SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]. This committee discusses the expulsion of Knesset members who have strayed. Who will head it, Refa'el Pinhasi? He also gave out the Finance Committee, the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, and the Education Committee. In the next Knesset the Likud will have no tools to deal with the budget and legislation, the two most important issues in the Knesset. Neither will it hold positions that breed new generations of politicians. Everything will start and end with Netanyahu.

The feeling is that as far as Netanyahu is concerned the Likud has done its bit and can now go home, until he needs them again, in another four years less two months. The same goes for the people: No other politicians contributed more to his election than Meridor and Begin (in the television campaign ads) or more than Ari'el Sharon (by bringing David Levi, Refa'el Eytan, and what is most important, the ultra-Orthodox vote). The impression is that Netanyahu treats them as disposable goods: use and discard.

The irony is that his appointments also arouse doubts in their own merit. The job of finance minister calls for a man with a social and political viewpoint. The finance minister has traditionally had vast influence in Israeli politics, which is exactly what Netanyahu wanted to get rid of. "I don't want two prime ministers," he said. That is why he was prepared to give the job to Meridor, on the condition that the heart — the Budget Department — be extirpated from the Finance Ministry.

When Meridor turned it down he offered it to Frenkel, and gave him back the Budget Department. There is no need to emasculate Frenkel, who is powerless to begin with. He is an accidental tourist here. He has no troops behind him, except a few journalists. He arouses no public emotion, except the hostility of a couple of industrialists. If appointed, he will have to prove his ability when he is called upon to deal with workers given the pink slip in Ofaqim and with the panhandling of SHAS, the National Religious Party, and Agudat Yisra'el. He will yet miss the bank.

This is a government whose ministers (except perhaps for Netanyahu) will have a hard time speaking to the Americans. The U.S. Administration is loathe to quarrel with the new government. Elections are coming up in another four and a half months, and Clinton will not let Dole steal the Jewish vote from him. But Netanyahu ought to think about the peace process collapsing in front of his eyes, the danger of terror, and the morning after the elections in America. Are these the troops he is taking along to war?

This is a government where Eli Suissa, the man who ordered the demolition of Arab houses in Jerusalem, will be the interior minister and where Ya'aqov Ne'eman, the defense attorney of numerous transgressors, is supposed to administer justice. One cannot avoid the feeling that Netanyahu does not regard this as his real government. It is just a facade. Behind it lies some kind of Finkelstein from America, or a Lieberman from nobody-knows-where who will run the real affairs.

In a Bible parable Jotham tells the trees: "If in good faith you are anointing me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon." Bibi is more sophisticated than that: Whether they take refuge in his shade or not, fire will come out of the bramble and devour everybody.

Israel: Editorial Criticizes U.S. Leniency Toward Palestinian Authority

TA1706115996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 17 June 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Unwarranted American Compliments"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Aaron Miller, a leading member of the State Department's policy team on the Middle East, recently told a Jewish audience that there were three issues on which Yasir 'Arafat's compliance with the Oslo accords should be measured. One of these is the PLO Covenant, in which, according to the administration, he has made the necessary changes. The second is the extradition provision, which 'Arafat has not adhered to, but is "open to legalistic interpretations." And the third is the fight against terrorism, in which 'Arafat has "performed magnificently." The conclusion, said Miller, is that now Israel must withdraw from Hebron.

The argument on whether or not 'Arafat has actually amended the PLO Covenant has become tiresome. But the fact is that even now, 'Arafat apologists cannot point to a single amended clause. In fact, one of the big mysteries of the covenant story is the composition of the "legal committee" expected to submit a proposal for an amended covenant within six months. More than a month after the Palestinian National Council passed the resolution to appoint such a committee, it has yet to come into existence.

Whether or not the extradition agreement is, as Miller says, "open to interpretation" — a questionable and cynical assertion — is hardly the point. The fact is that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has released known terrorists who have murdered Israelis after the signing of the accords, and that in all terrorist cases of the past months, the killers found shelter in PA areas. Some of the worst have joined the Palestinian security services.

True, there has been some cooperation between the Palestinians and Israel's General Security Service. But none of the most wanted Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] terrorists, most notably Hasan Salamah who was nabbed by the army in Hebron last month, has been caught with PA help. On the contrary, the most wanted Hamas leader, Muhammad Dayf, whose capture was cited by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres as a condition for Israel's redeployment in Hebron, has been allowed to escape Gaza. This, after he stayed there unharmed for three months following the February-March suicide bombings which he had masterminded.

Now it has become clear that the cooperation between the PLO and Israel against Hamas terrorism was intended to last only until the Israeli elections. The ongoing contacts between the PA and Hamas, partly suspended during the pre-election period, have now resumed.

Sources in the PA openly say that soon, virtually all Hamas operatives detained after the suicide bombings will be released. Neither 'Arafat nor any other prominent PA official condemned the latest terrorist outrages against Israelis, including the murder of civilians inside the Green Line. And on Friday [14 June], 'Arafat himself, in a demonstrative move, arrived at the Nabulus prison and personally ordered the release of Shaykh Jamal Mansur, a member of the Hamas high command. He then accompanied him to prayer services at a mosque in the city center. Both the PA and Hamas have distributed leaflets calling for rapprochement and negotiations for concerted action.

These moves, added to 'Arafat's declaration in al-'Aqabah on June 5 that he intends to announce the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, are in clear violation of the Oslo agreement. (The PA soon recognized this, and — insulting the world's intelligence — the PLO's representative in Jordan asserted that the 'Arafat statement, featured on the front page of all Arab newspapers, was an unfortunate slip, a result of his poor English. Compounding the felony, the Israeli Consulate in New York distributed this "explanation" to all Jewish leaders.)

Although the Palestinian rhetoric has become milder in the past few days — almost certainly as a result of

American pressure — 'Arafat's moves to reconcile with Hamas and again have a "working" agreement with the Islamist organization, is worrisome. Nor do the latest shooting incidents, including yesterday's killing of a policeman and the wounding of his wife, bode well for the negotiations.

The new government's policy guidelines call for a continued dialogue with the PA, but they make such a continuation contingent on the PA's compliance with the Oslo and Cairo agreements. It is unlikely that unwarranted compliments for the PA by high American officials will bring such compliance — and the negotiations — closer to realization.

Israel: Commentary Urges Immediate Withdrawal From South Lebanon

TA1706100696 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (HAYOM supplement) in Hebrew 17 Jun 96 p 2

[Commentary by Shalom Yerushalmi: "Lebanon First"]

[FBIS Translated Text] If Binyamin Netanyahu wants to score a lot of quick points, let him use his inaugural speech in the Knesset today as prime minister to declare his willingness to implement a far-reaching compromise in south Lebanon. "I am worried about the officers, the soldiers, and the mothers," he should say. "We have no territorial ambitions in Lebanon. I am willing to withdraw our forces immediately to the international border. I am calling upon the presidents of Syria and Lebanon to discuss with me the assumption of responsibility for the evacuated area."

This could be a great positive drama. For the last decade and a half our forces have been deployed on sovereign Lebanese territory, paying a heavy toll in blood. We counted on the SLA [South Lebanese Army] to protect us, but in fact the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is sandwiched between the SLA and the Hizballah terrorists, who are constantly improving their attacks against us and pushing us into grandiose military operations that solve nothing. The Israeli occupation also affords Hizballah activity international legitimacy. The Syrians, Lebanese, and fundamentalist leaders are all saying that if the IDF withdraws from south Lebanon the guerrilla attacks will stop. Nobody has put them to the test yet.

Netanyahu can change the whole situation; he has a unique opportunity to do so. If he facilitates a compromise in south Lebanon he will find himself backed by an amazing coalition: the international community, including friendly countries embarrassed by our presence there; the left-wing parties, from Labor to HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality]; the commanders of an army which is daily losing its status and prestige in view of the grave attacks in the security zone; thousands of families whose sons serve in Lebanon and whose lives have become a daily hell; and in fact an entire country anxiously waiting for the hero who will save it from this mass suicide in the north.

Even the right-wing partners will thank Netanyahu. On the issues of the Golan Heights and Judaea and Samaria the new prime minister is shackled by ideological, strategic, and other constraints. Senior officials from the Likud, the NRP [National Religious Party], Third Way (on the Golan issue), Moledet, and the rest of the parties will decrease Netanyahu's maneuvering room to a bare minimum. As far as south Lebanon is concerned, however, the situation is totally different. It is true Netanyahu will have to cope with Refa'el Eytan and others who want to expand the security zone, but he will be able to deal with them. The public is craving for a remedy. The main question popping up in any social affair in the past few months is "what will be the end of the Lebanon issue," and Netanyahu can bring about this end.

Netanyahu will also be doing himself and his government a great service. A creative solution in the north will create a positive momentum and will remove the great concern abroad and in Israel regarding the right wing's policy. Netanyahu, who before the elections promised in private talks that he will launch global peace moves, will thus signal to the world that he is not a bloodthirsty hawk, rather a pragmatic and constructive politician aiming at moderation and compromise. Lebanon is his big opportunity. One of Prime Minister Peres' great achievements was bringing about the partial withdrawal from Lebanon after the 1982 war.

Moreover, a compromise in Lebanon will prove what has been always maintained here: as far as peace is concerned, Labor has always desired but only the Likud can deliver. Netanyahu's security zone can be Begin's Sinai. The latter came to power as a warmonger, then proceeded to sign the peace agreement with Egypt and won the support of most Knesset members. It will not be easy. Withdrawal involves great problems, mostly in terms of concern for the SLA collaborators, but if it saves the life of one soldier it will be worth everything.

Jordan: King Briefs Cabinet on U.S. Visit, Summit

JN1706174596 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Jun 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Their Majesties King Husayn and Queen Nur returned home this evening after visits to the United Kingdom and the United States. [passage omitted]

Upon his return to the homeland, his majesty the king presided over a cabinet meeting at the Royal Pavilion at the airport. The meeting was attended by the president of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chief of the Royal Court. King Husayn presented the results of his visit to the United States and his talks with President Bill Clinton and senior U.S. and Congress officials.

His majesty the king stressed that these talks were positive and very fruitful, noting that, during all the talks he held, he felt genuine feelings of appreciation of Jordan, its distinguished role in all circumstances, and of all that has been achieved on the path of peace, democratization, and human rights. The king reaffirmed that the U.S. officials, particularly President Clinton, reiterated U.S. commitment to the peace process, its participation in it, and its support for it.

The Council of Ministers reviewed Jordan's preparations for the Arab summit that will be held in Cairo after a few days. The king underscored Jordan's stand, which supports and backs any effort to revive Arab solidarity and common Arab action. His majesty the king said that Jordan has always supported any Arab meeting that unifies the brothers' word, closes the nation's ranks, and works toward safeguarding its rights and the future of its generations. The king added that Jordan's participation in this summit is an embodiment of this clear view and a continuation of the stands that provide the brothers with opportunities for dialogue, candid talks, and clearing the atmosphere to strengthen their solidarity and unity out of concern for their issues and their people's interests.

Jordan: Turkish Envoy Denies 'Involvement' in Syria Explosions

JN1806111496 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 18 Jun 96 p 25

[Report by Sa'd al-Silawi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Turkish Ambassador to Jordan Suha Umar [name as transliterated] asserted that Turkey has no intention to encroach upon Syrian territories to track down the fighters of the Kurdistan Workers Party [PKK]. In a statement to AL-RA'Y, the ambassador said that his country has no plans to carry out any military actions against Syria or the PKK. He said that Turkey informs Baghdad in advance of the movement of the Turkish army regarding the tracking of Kurds in northern Iraq.

Ambassador Umar denied that the Turkish army was put on a state of alert. He also denied the existence of a Turkish military buildup or activities on the borders with Syria. He added that Ankara does not believe the Syrian concentration of more than 40,000 soldiers on the border with Turkey is targeted against it.

Regarding reports on exchange of fire between Turkish and Syrian troops on the border, the Turkish ambassador said: Neither we nor Syria opened fire. I do not think there is any reason for exchanging fire.

Asked about reports on Turkey's involvement in explosions in Syria, Umar said: We do not use such methods. We fight and resist terrorism. We do not support any party that carries out terrorist operations. Turkey has nothing to do with the explosions that took place in Syria.

He said: Relations with Syria are neither strained nor good. In order for these relations to improve, Syria should stop supporting the PKK, which carries out anti-Turkish activities.

Concerning mediation between Syria and Turkey, the Turkish ambassador said: We do not need any mediation between us and Syria. If the Syrians are ready to talk to us, then we are ready to do the same.

With respect to the Turkish-Israeli military cooperation, Ambassador Umar said: We cooperate with various countries. This does not mean that this cooperation targets a certain party. Moreover, we need military assistance from Israel or any other country.

He pointed out that cooperation and close ties with Jordan stem from the identical positions of the two countries on major issues, like combating terrorism. He noted that both Jordan and Turkey lead a democratic life. He asserted that this cooperation targets nobody.

He noted that Turkey's losses following the Gulf War and due to the interruption of trade with Iraq and the suspension of the Iraqi oil pipeline amounted to $20 billion. He said that Turkey will earn a total of $200 million every six moths after re-operating the pipeline. He said that this is not enough compared to the great losses incurred by the Turkish economy as a result of the Gulf war. He said that Turkey will supply Jordan and Israel with water through sea balloons. He noted that feasibility studies for this project were conducted.

He asserted that Turkey will not use water as a weapon against anybody. He added that Turkey is ready to provide all the countries of the region and the Arabian Gulf states with water, the cost of which will be lower than desalinating sea water.

Lebanon: Buwayz Warns Against Netanyahu's Hardline Policy

NC1806141796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1300 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has asserted that if Israeli Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu continues to stick to his hardline policy of refusing to return the Golan Heights to Syria, ruling out a solution on Jerusalem, and opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state, the peace process will suffer and stumble.

At a news conference held at the Lebanese Foreign Ministry this afternoon, Buwayz said the climate of Arab disarray and Arab alliances with foreign countries should not continue at the expense of the Arab cause. He said the Arab parties participating in the Cairo Summit must realize that if the first line of defense in southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights falls, the economic and political defense line in the Gulf region will not hold.

On whether the Cairo Summit will discuss the April understanding [between the Lebanese and Israeli Governments], Buwayz said this understanding was the outcome of a certain political climate. As long as there is a prospect for peace, the April understanding can constitute a temporary and interim mechanism for a quiet and objective dialogue.

Lebanon: Information Minister Condemns AFP Journalist's 'Kidnapping'

NC1706170796 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Information Minister Farid Makari condemned the kidnapping of Lebanese journalist 'Ali Diya by the Israeli forces, and the fact that they took him from the occupied security strip into the occupied territories and are holding him under the pretext of wanting to interrogate him. Makari said he will contact the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations to learn about the fate of Diya and work on releasing him.

In a statement it issued, Hizballah denied having any connection with journalist 'Ali Diya. Hizballah said that accusing Diya of dealing with Hizballah is not at all true.

Lebanon: Palestinian Official Reportedly Killed 17 Jun Said Alive

NC1806105896 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian official Nabil Khattab, whose house in the 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp was targeted by a blast yesterday, is still alive. A Palestinian source said Khattab was outside his home when the incident took place. When he learned the reasons, he kept in hiding for fear that relatives of the victims could take revenge on him for turning his home—in a residential area—into an ammunition depot. The Palestinian source, Sultan Abu-al-'Aynayn, noted that Khattab is being treated for a nervous breakdown at a Palestinian clinic in an area of Sidon.

Syria: Radio Underlines Arabs' Peace Commitment

JN1606055696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1135 GMT 15 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] We do not believe that any of those who are familiar with the nature of the long negotiations that took place within the context of the peace process, or any of the observers in the peace process and the region, are now unaware of the conflict's origin or the substance of the solution. Land is the problem and land is the solution. Also, the Israeli occupation is the obstacle preventing the establishment of a just, comprehensive, and viable peace.

Only Israel is still wagering on dismissing these facts. It also sticks to illusions, which dwell in the minds of some of its officials. These officials think they can have both occupation and peace without giving any consideration to Arab land, without taking into account Arab rights, and without considering the requirements of justice and comprehensiveness in the kind of peace that can endure and be accepted by the people.

Throughout the peace process, only the Israeli officials employed falsehoods and lies and promoted views, which all fell short of the just and comprehensive peace. They also tried to justify their constant aggression, of which there were several hot and flagrant rounds, both inside the occupied Arab territories — by escalating the acts of repression and terrorism, demolition of houses, and burning of crops — or in southern Lebanon, which is subjected to the ugliest form of aggression by the occupation troops. The occupation troops turned southern Lebanon into a field of real war in which hundreds of children, women, and old men were killed in actions that violate even the simplest international norms.

In both cases, the kind of peace which Israel was hoping to achieve was not established. The limited withdrawal and the redeployment which the occupation troops carried out in the West Bank and Gaza did not achieve peace or provide stability. On the contrary, the results produced by the incomplete settlement resemble a potential bomb that can explode at any time. It must be stressed that the acts of repression and terrorism, the displacement of Palestinians, and the expulsion of intifadah activists led only to strengthening the struggle and establishing the fact that resistance is the only option for the people to face Israel's crimes, terrorism, and occupation.

As for the case of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, the lessons of Israel's attacks since 1982 — when the Likud Government, led by Menahem Begin, staged an all-out invasion under the codename Peace for Galilee — are countless. All these lessons confirm that the language of might and arrogant force cannot provide security or stability for Israel. They also confirm that every aggression staged by Israel will only strengthen the national and pan-Arab cohesion and support to the resistance, which was a result of occupation and not a cause, as Israel claims today. Furthermore, they confirm that Israel is deceiving itself and the world when it ignores the fact that the Israeli occupation is the problem and the cause for the hot conflicts and that complete withdrawal is the only solution.

Israel knows more than anybody else that peace cannot be established without complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 lines. According to this benchmark, peace has become a strategic option in Syria's policy and without this, peace cannot be achieved.

The Israeli officials deceive themselves before the world when they avoid facts and refuse to discuss the basics of real peace, which is the kind of peace that has well-known conditions and standards and which ensures the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace formula. The Golan Heights, southern Lebanon, and all occupied Arab territories must be returned in full so that it would be possible to pave the way for a just and comprehensive peace, which is the essential and indispensable gateway to achieve security and stability in the region for the benefit of all parties.

If there are signs of a tangible shift in the Israeli policy toward the peace process, the Arabs are firm on their positions, which adhere to the principles of the just and comprehensive peace. The Arabs associate this peace with the regain of all the territory without abandoning a single inch and without bargaining over any of the national and pan-Arab rights. The negative realities of the initial ideas and papers presented by Likud leaders require an international stand to confirm the world community's commitment to advance the peace efforts and force Israel to accept, in word and deed, the conditions of peace. They must also submit to the will to achieve a just and comprehensive peace without any deceit or evasion. This is especially since the Arabs underlined, through the Damascus tripartite summit, their adherence to peace as a strategic option.

Syria: Commentary—Summit 'To Defend the Principles of True Peace'

JN1606140296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 16 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The Damascus summit emphasized Arab adherence to just and comprehensive peace and its pillars based on the UN resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

The Arab capitals' statements on the Cairo summit are along the same lines, emphasizing peace as a strategic option and calling for solidarity and coordination of Arab efforts so that the aspired peace will be based on the solid ground of a unified Arab position.

One important fact is confirmed: the Arabs want their rights and they want peace. Based on their strong eagerness to realize peace, they have emphasized the need for this peace to be based on the principles of right and justice and the resolutions of the international legitimacy, because only this will guarantee popular acceptance and reflect their concern for peace.

The logic of events emphasizes that the international efforts by the big powers, especially the United States, Russia, and the European Union states, following the results of the recent Israeli elections. The victory of the Israeli right demonstrate their concern for the fate of the peace process, for which they have worked with Syria and the Arabs since the Madrid conference. These efforts also demonstrate the big powers' fear of losing peace if the Likud party and its government stick to their declarations of keeping the occupied land and continuing to build settlements. These declarations conflict with the substance of peace and the pillars of the Madrid conference, which are based on the land-for-peace principle.

The only objective of the Cairo summit is to defend the principles of true peace and unify Arab efforts to defend the Arab rights guaranteed by the international resolutions that formed the basis for the peace initiative and the Madrid conference. These rights are the complete return of the Golan, southern Lebanon, and occupied Arab land, including Arab Jerusalem, and the securing of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people. Based on this, Israel's ideas about security and keeping the occupied Arab land for the sake of Israel's security are in blatant defiance of the international consensus that calls for making peace in accordance with the aforementioned principles, which guarantee the rights and security of all parties, not the security of one party at the expense of the security and rights of others.

The Arab desire and will to realize peace are prompting all the Arabs to meet at a high-level summit to reach a unified position toward resumption of the peace process on the basis of the principles on which it was started. It is not enough for one party to commit itself to the international legitimacy and to the success of the peace process, however, unless the other party — Israel — commits itself to these principles and respects the Arab rights that were guaranteed by the international resolutions, so that the region will not face more tension and confusion.

The responsibility of the peace process cosponsors — especially the United States, which launched the initiative and is the main partner in the peace process — seems to be a double responsibility, in order to protect the peace process from collapse, which would threaten the security of the region and the world.

Under these circumstances and changes, the Cairo summit is asked to thoroughly define the position that all Arabs must adopt to defend their rights — which is a defense of the principles of just peace. The Arabs only demand a just implementation of the resolutions of the international legitimacy, which guarantee peace, its comprehensiveness, and continuity.

Syria: New Israeli Government Policy on Occupied Lands Criticized

JN1706144796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 17 Jun 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: Preparations are under way for a successful Arab summit in Cairo. Contrary to allegations by some biased circles, the summit is being held to meet an urgent Arab need. Before the Gulf war, Arab summits were part of traditional Arab policy, and the Arab leaders were eager to hold consultations and coordinate their position in order to adopt a concerted position toward the problems and dangers that faced them.

There is no doubt that the recent changes in Israel helped speed up plans for an Arab summit. The Arabs gave a positive response to the U.S. initiative and international endeavors and made every effort to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the Security Council resolutions and the principle of land for peace.

The Arabs in general and the cordon states in particular were assured by the United States that a just and comprehensive solution would be reached. The Arabs, as well as the world that aspires to peace, were shocked when the new Israeli prime minister declared his decision to retain the Golan Heights, Jerusalem, and southern Lebanon and to keep the Palestinian city of Hebron under Israeli control, asserting, at the same time, that he might allow the Israeli Army to operate in the six West Bank cities of the self-rule.

This amounts to a declaration of war against the U.S. initiative, the international efforts, and the whole peace process. The Arab leaders have the right and are also duty bound to study the situation, draw lessons from it, and confront the international community with its responsibilities, particularly the United States, the main sponsor of the peace process.

What happened in the past is that Israel penetrated the Arab ranks; imposed certain conditions and partial, incomplete settlements; and is now trying to disavow even these settlements. Because the conflict in the region is an Arab-Israeli one and obliges all the Arabs to defend their rights and territories — including the city of Jerusalem, which is of concern to all the Arabs and Muslims — it is natural for the Arabs to review the situation, end fragmentation, and maintain a unified position in order to preserve their rights and emphasize the bases and facts of the peace process.

The tripartite Damascus summit between Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia defined the correct path by urging a revival of pan-Arab solidarity in the face of foreign challenges and asserting that a just and comprehensive peace is a strategic option and that Israel will be held responsible for any departure from the peace process and its bases and goals. Everybody expects the Cairo summit to reaffirm the Arabs' readiness to establish a just, comprehensive, and firm peace in the region based on Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, which call for a total withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the occupied territories to behind the 4 June 1967 lines.

This objective, fair stand is backed by the countries of the world. We would like to point out that the U.S. initiative was originally based on the principle of land for peace. The Cairo summit will not close the door in the face of peace, as some circles allege. On the contrary, it will protect the peace process from attempts to undermine it and will give Israel, if it wants peace, a chance to revive and accelerate the negotiations. If Israel refuses to respond to the basis of just and comprehensive peace and continues its aggressive, expansionist trends, it will be responsible for plunging the region into tension and explosions once again.

Israel, as well as the world, knows well that peace will not prevail in the Middle East unless the Arabs restore all their territories and rights. Any attempt to keep the Golan, Jerusalem, or southern Lebanon under Israel's control will inevitably lead to the collapse of the peace process and to the loss of all the international efforts over the years.

Syria: TISHRIN Views Choice of Netanyahu as Prime Minister

JN1706082896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 17 Jun 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "A Look at Netanyahu's Intellectual Background," an editorial by the newspaper TISHRIN published today wonders why the Israelis chose Netanyahu for the post of prime minister. The paper answers: His choice for this post can be attributed to several convictions embedded in the minds of Israeli voters. Broad sectors of the Israeli community believe that Netanyahu will make a serious attempt to rescue the Zionist program from its current stupor. They believe that Netanyahu can rehabilitate this program and render it more attractive and acceptable to world Jewry. Many Israelis believe that the seizure of power by a generation of youths represented by Netanyahu, who is strongly imbued with the ideas of Herzl, Jabotinsky, and Ben-Gurion, will help reinvigorate, revitalize, and rehabilitate the Zionist dream.

TISHRIN adds: The choice of Netanyahu to the post of prime minister also came to correct a practice that marked the conduct of the generation that established Israel and ruled it since its inception in 1948. Most Israeli leaders hailed from Eastern Europe, while very few were U.S. Jewish immigrants, which is in stark contrast to the great alliance binding Israel to the United States. It should be recalled that Netanyahu lived most of his life in the United States.

TISHRIN goes on to say: It was not a coincidence that Yitzhaq Shamir, who is known for his total hostility to Arabs and Muslims, should appoint Netanayahu as his spokesman at the Madrid peace conference, and name him later as his successor in the Likud leadership. To have a clearer picture of Netanyahu's background, we must shed light on his intellectual background, which was summed up in a book he published last year under the headline "A Place Under the Sun." This book, which spelled out the Likud leader's intellectual and political program, helped him win support among the Israelis and votes in recent elections. This book is full of hatred for the Arabs. It describes them using the most heinous epithets. According to Netanyahu, the Arabs are not to be trusted. They are blood-thirsty and prone to violence. They harbor rancor toward others and view democracy and freedom as anathema. To him, Islam is the epitome of violence. It fosters hatred.

The Likud leader continues his fallacies, saying: It was the Arabs who usurped Jewish territory. He believes that even Jordan was carved out of the area meant to constitute a national homeland for Jews. This homeland must include the territory of Greater Israel, which extends from the Euphrates to the Nile. As for the Arabs, they belong in the desert, in the Arabian Peninsula in particular.

TISHRIN adds: This book is not a relic of the old Zionist literature. It was published only last year. It was written by the Likud leader. This shows the profound Zionist rancor the Israeli community harbors toward Arabs and toward their pan-Arab and unity-orientated aspirations. It should be recalled that Netanyahu unequivocally says that he will oppose all Arab unity plans. He believes that the pan-Arab ideology is a Pandora box of all evils and hatreds.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says: If Netanyahu begins to implement his election platform without any modifications, this will mark the end of the peace process and foster conflict and wars in the region. As for Syria, it will not budge a hairsbreadth on its demand for complete withdrawal from the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the remaining occupied territory. As a matter of fact, it deems withdrawal from the Golan the key to peace in the entire region.

Syria: Press—U.S., Russia Should Force Israel To Respond to Peace Calls

JN1506103396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 15 Jun 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "A Just, Comprehensive Peace is a Strategic Option," TISHRIN comments on the 23d expanded Arab summit scheduled to be held in Cairo. TISHRIN says that the peace process will head the agenda of the summit, whose deliberations will stress adherence to the peace option.

TISHRIN stresses that no more Israeli excesses should be allowed. Israel should not be allowed to defy the peace process and its desired objectives, which are supported by documents, pledges, and assurances based on the need for real and serious implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

TISHRIN says: Therefore, in response to the will of international legitimacy, Israel should pledge to fully advance the peace process on all tracks and end the current stalemate. Israel should give up the extremist no's and intransigent stands that appeared during the election propaganda campaigns launched by new Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to reach power. The peace process hinges on Israel. In order to activate the peace process, Israel must respond to the serious and sincere Arab efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive peace, for the peace equation must have two sides. The entire world testifies that the Arabs are concerned about the peace process and that peace cannot be achieved by the Arab side alone. Everything requires that Israel honor its commitments and deal with peace requirements with a positive and constructive spirit.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: A great deal still needs to be done. This is a responsibility that should be shouldered by the cosponsors of the peace process — the United States and the Russian Federation. They should force Israel to seriously and genuinely respond to the peace calls, away from provocative statements, propaganda, and futile, deceptive pretexts.

Under the headline "Toward a Strategic Summit," AL-THAWRAH comments on the hopes pinned on the forthcoming Arab summit. It says that the Arab masses want the Arab summit to adopt a set of options whose basis and objective should be peace. However, peace must not mean capitulation. It must be based on justice and comprehensiveness, as indicated by the Damascus summit's statement.

AL-THAWRAH says: Besides discussing the peace process and its bases and laying down its various strategies, the summit is required to integrate all Arab political moves into one pan-Arab move that prevents any violation of pan-Arab commitments and, consequently, any unwarranted measure, normalization, or one-upmanship that is not in line with the overall pan-Arab position and the Arab nation's supreme interests. The peace process is a comprehensive process based on specific bases that do not tolerate any dangerous breakaway or violation of the Arab nation's will. Any move in the other direction would be in the interest of Israel and would abort the process of realizing a just, comprehensive peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The summit is required to set a plan for an Arab policy that is in line with the Arab interest in peace, the future, and construction, away from any separate and impromptu moves. Only such a plan would prevent risky moves and relinquishment. If the summit manages to set the minimum requirements for the next stage, it would thus be restoring to the summit institution all the pan-Arab importance the Arabs attach to it.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that the summit is an institution of special importance at this difficult phase of Arab action.

Concluding its editorial, the paper says: Hence, the forthcoming Arab summit will be of special importance because it will be held in extremely special circumstances and will face special challenges from the surrounding and anti-Arab forces.

Syria: TISHRIN Condemns 'New' Israeli 'Massacre' in Lebanon

JN1606110196 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0815 GMT 16 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 16 Jun (SANA) — The newspaper TISHRIN says: Clearly, the Israeli provocations and barbaric attacks in southern Lebanon, targeting both people and infrastructure, are part of the feverish Israeli attempts to defame the resistance against occupation. They are also part of the enemy's attempts to muffle its violations of the April understanding and target the lives and income sources of civilians.

In an article in its "Opinion" column today, the paper points to the new Israeli massacre in the town of Hula inside the occupied part of southern Lebanon on Friday [14 June]. The paper notes that the occupation troops and their Lahd agents planted an explosive device that went off, killing three children.

It adds that at a time when the world calls for continuing the peace process in the region, Israel allows itself to commit massacres, carry out unlawful actions, and violate rules in breach of all international laws and norms.

TISHRIN asserts: Israel should realize that it cannot impose its peace on Lebanon through shelling, killing, and aggression just as it failed in the past to separate Lebanon, force it to surrender, and conclude a separate deal with it.

Concluding its article, the paper says: Israel utterly failed to undermine the Lebanese national resistance, or to separate Lebanon and deal with it individually. It also failed to impose a political deal similar to the 17 May agreement, because Lebanon chose brotherhood, cooperation, and coordination with Syria.

Syria: Khaddam Denies Troops Deploying Along Turkish Border

JN1706204096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2010 GMT 17 Jun 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus; from the "Panorama" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Answering a question by Radio Monte Carlo, Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam denied the existence of concentrations of Syrian troops along the border with Turkey. The Syrian vice president spoke about Turkish deployments and provocations against Syria from time to time, asserting that Syria has not taken any measures regarding them. The vice president said: Tension is not in anybody's interest. He noted Syria's request for a meeting of the joint security committee to discuss recent developments.

Reacting to Turkey's accusations that Syria has been sending armored units to strengthen its forces along its northern borders, near Turkey, official [Syrian] sources said: These accusations are aimed at distracting attention from the recent Turkish-Israeli military agreement, which threatens the security of all states in the region. The accusations, the sources said, are also aimed at increasing the pressure on Syria from Turkey in the north and through statements made by Jordan to the south in an attempt to change the Syrian position toward the peace process, in addition to the attempts to distract attention from the new Israeli Government, led by the hardliner Netanyahu, and its antipeace efforts. The sources described the Netanyahu government's program as an obstruction of the peace process, which was launched in 1991. The sources called on the Arab countries that have opened their doors to Israel to review the situation.

Syria: Khaddam on Turkish Troop Massing, Arab Summit, Likud Policy

NC1706185996 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 17 Jun 96

[Interview with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam in Damascus Tawfiq Jazulit; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Khaddam] In fact, there are some Turkish concentrations in areas on the border.

[Jazulit] Does this mean that Turkey is up to something?

[Khaddam] We do not want to envisage such a possibility. We have not taken any military action. Turkey knows very well, and all of us in the region know, that tension is in no one's interest. There are concentrations and some provocations from time to time.

[Jazulit] As regards the summit, Syrian diplomacy has played a major role in preparing for it and inviting Arab leaders to attend it in Egypt. Do you think, or rather are there indications that, this summit will secure a minimal measure of Arab solidarity?

[Khaddam] We hope to make achievements. We might not achieve our ambitions, but surely we hope to achieve positive and serious results.

[Jazulit] The U.S. Administration has asked us, the Arabs, to wait, not to be hasty, and see what the new Israeli Government's policy is.

[Khaddam] Wait for what? The Israeli program was announced during the elections. Even if we suppose that Netanyahu is moderate...

[Jazulit, interrupts] He is not moderate.

[Khaddam] He is not. But even under the assumption that he is moderate, he is allied to extremist religious parties and his platform is governed by these parties' stands. Therefore, the program of the Likud, and that of the parties allied with it, obstruct serious steps toward a peace on which the entire world was unanimous.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani on Hekmatyar, Taleban, 'Partition'

MM1706143296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 17 Jun 96 pp 1, 6

[Interview with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani by Ahmad Muwaffaq Zaydan in Kabul; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Zaydan] Why was the announcement of the new cabinet and Hekmatyar's arrival in Kabul delayed?

[Rabbani] These matters were in the hands of the joint committee members, who had to decide when brother Golboddin Hekmatyar should arrive. They made arrangements to meet first and then contact the other parties to put their decisions to them, and then announce the outcome of these contacts.

Neither our list of ministerial candidates nor Hekmatyar's list posed any basic problem or was an obstacle to the accord. The problem may have been caused instead by the lists from the other parties wishing to join the coalition government. From the time we initiated the dialogue with all parties, we have been thinking of enabling others to participate. Our agreement with Hekmatyar is aimed at putting an end to the disputes and providing a platform to enable everyone to participate in the transitional government and future decisions. We are now waiting for brother Hekmatyar, and there is no problem regarding his arrival

[Zaydan] Are we to understand from your remarks that Hekmatyar will arrive in Kabul before the new cabinet is announced?

[Rabbani] His arrival before or after poses no problem. That is up to brother Hekmatyar. If he arrives before the announcement, he is welcome, but if he has other ideas in mind, we have no objections. What is important is that we are determined to implement what we have agreed.

[Zaydan] Have you set a date for announcing the cabinet formation?

[Rabbani] As I said before, the joint committee will contact the parties' leaders to put to them what has been agreed and explain to them that the objective is to resolve the crisis rather than distribute ministerial portfolios. If the parties are thinking of distributing portfolios, we are prepared to examine this idea.

[Zaydan] As you know, the Taleban movement has refused to join this agreement. Does this mean that you will attack its positions in order to put an end to the rocket and artillery attacks on Kabul?

[Rabbani] We have often said that our basic strategy is to reach an understanding and resolve issues through dialogue. Although we do not favor the military settlement, the right to defend oneself is a legitimate right. It is the government's duty to defend Kabul and not to allow Taleban to continue its attacks on the city's innocent inhabitants. Despite the constant shelling by Taleban, we are still looking for a solution through dialogue. We are waiting for the mediators to return from Kandahar (Taleban's base) to find out what they have achieved. The basic issue is that the decision is not in the Taleban leaders' hands.

[Zaydan] A few days ago you said that you intend to send delegations to meet with the opposition leaders. Have you started doing that?

[Rabbani] A group of citizens emerged in the north, contacts were held between both sides, and we recently sent a delegation [sentence as published]. We are thinking of setting up a joint delegation with Hekmatyar, if he agrees, and with other groups, and sending these to the north and to Taleban's base to look for a solution to the problem.

[Zaydan] Some two weeks ago Hekmatyar told us that Washington wanted to partition Afghanistan by establishing a federation and convincing some Afghan quarters of the idea . What are your views on this?

[Rabbani] We were aware that there were moves afoot to partition Afghanistan, or to try to establish a federation, but we did not know their origin. We believe that the Afghan people will not let any side, whether at home or abroad, partition the country. The people want to live together and safeguard Afghanistan's territorial integrity. These attempts are nothing new.

[Zaydan] General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of the Uzbek militias in the north, is trying to hold elections in the areas under his control. Is this a step toward establishing a federation?

[Rabbani] These matters which are taking place in some governorates are not important. Any political decision, whether in the south or in the north, must be made freely by the people. No group can ever take such momentous decisions alone.

[Zaydan] Can we say that the threat of partition is no longer there?

[Rabbani] I believe that partitioning cannot take place, especially following our agreement with Hezb-e Eslami. We want to broaden the agreement and enable others to join. We are confident that, God willing, partitioning will not succeed.

[Zaydan] What are the implications of the resignation of Mahmoud Mestiri, the international mediator, and what is the future role of the United Nations in Afghanistan?

[Rabbani] The problem with Mestiri is that he was not trying seriously to resolve the issues, and that he did not take into consideration the current situation in Afghanistan. He was handling the issues from a perspective which was different from the reality in Afghanistan, and that is why he failed. He knows that continuous outside interference is the basic problem. Mestiri and other outside quarters want to impose unrealistic solutions. Mestiri and the Taleban backers were under the illusion that Taleban is the means by which they can impose solutions which are at odds with the Afghan jihad's objectives. All this explains why Mestiri failed. Whoever takes this route will fail. We believe that the internal solution is the ideal solution, and that the United Nations and the states which want the Afghanistan issue resolved must back the internal solution, because it is the shortest route to resolving the issue.

Afghanistan: Iran's Borujerdi Reports 'Significant Progress' in Talks

LD1706070296 Tehran IRNA in English 0559 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 17, IRNA — The Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi arrived in Kabul Sunday [16 Jun] night from Mazar-e Sharif in continuation of his fresh efforts to mediate between the warring Afghan groups and hold talks with leaders of various groups.

Upon arrival in Kabul, he told IRNA that the Islamic Republic of Iran will definitely continue its efforts to settle the Afghan crisis and to establish peace and tranquility in the war-torn country.

He stressed that all countries interested in establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan should encourage all belligerent groups to halt clashes and to sit at negotiation table.

The Iranian deputy foreign minister further underlined that the Islamic Republic has made enormous efforts to pursuade the rival Afghan groups solve their problems through peaceful means. He added significant progress has been made in this regard.

Borujerdi and the accompanying delegation are scheduled to hold talks with senior Afghan officials.

Afghanistan: Iran's Borujerdi Hails ISA's 'Realistic' Stance

LD1706195096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA], today met with esteemed 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister of Iran. Esteemed Najibollah Lafra'i, minister of state for foreign affairs, was also present at the meeting.

The Presidential press office reports that the esteemed president spoke about the ongoing political situation and [word indistinct] on recent developments. Noting the effectiveness of the intra-Afghan talks, the esteemed president said [words indistinct] and the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran are commendable in this connection. Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani described the countries' cooperation as being in the interest of both their peoples, and in the interest of regional peace. He supported its expansion and consolidation.

In response esteemed 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, deputy foreign minister of Iran, presented a report about his visit to Afghanistan, and said: The Islamic Republic of Iran praises the ISA's efforts toward the expansion of talks with various Afghan parties and considers its stance completely realistic [words indistinct] with regard to the current issues in Afghanistan. [passage indistinct]

Afghanistan: Economic Cooperation With Iran Planned

LD1706210696 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Economic cooperation between Afghanistan and Iran will soon come into effect. The esteemed Seyyed Mohammad 'Ali Javid, deputy prime minister and minister of planning of Afghanistan, recently returned from Iran where he signed agreements on different fields of cooperation between the two states. He told BAKHTAR today that the joint Afghan-Iran economic commission held its first session in Tehran [words indistinct] on socio- economic and cultural cooperations. During the session the commission's policy was determined, and committees for finance, building and reconstruction, and culture were set up and have started work.

The deputy prime minister added: Toward the revival of an electricity network in Kabul, Iran's Ministry of Construction Jihad will soon send its engineers to Kabul to repair and revive Naghlo and Sarobi hydro-electricity plants.

About other resolutions of the joint economic commission, the esteemed Javid said: Other issues discussed during the session included agriculture, communication, mines and industries, and public health.

The deputy prime minister added that during his meeting with the esteemed 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he spoke about the problems of the Afghan refugees in that country, and an agreement was reached so that Iranian security sources would continue assisting the refugees, as they had done in the past, until the refugees returned to their homeland.

Afghanistan: Hekmatyar Party Aide Denies Bin-Ladin in Afghanistan

MM1706103996 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Jun 96 pp 1,4

[Report by 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Khamis in London: "Hekmatyar's Party Denies That Bin-Ladin Is in Afghanistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Ghayrat Baher, director of the office of the Afghan Hezb-e Eslami (Hekmatyar faction), has denied that Usamah Bin-Ladin is in Afghanistan.

Baher, contacted in Pakistan, said that "Usamah Bin-Ladin has not left Sudan and neither has he arrived in Afghanistan," and that this was confirmed to him personally by several Afghan leaders, including President Jalal-al-Din [as published] Rabbani, Golboddin Hekmatyar, and 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf, who denied that he is in Afghanistan.

Baher, who is also Hekmatyar's son-in-law, said that neither Usamah Bin-Ladin nor his aides have requested permission to come to Afghanistan, and that their arrival cannot be kept secret from the Afghans. There were rumors in Arab circles in Afghanistan that Bin-Ladin was seen with Hekmatyar some days before, a matter which the Afghan official strongly denied, explaining that his presence is "something that the Arabs in Afghanistan are dreaming about, because of their strong ties with him."

Meanwhile, Bin-Ladin's close aide and representative in London told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that contacts between Bin-Ladin and his aides outside Sudan had been interrupted. The aide added that he had been unable to contact Bin-Ladin and confirm his whereabouts, that he did not answer the faxes sent to him, and that there is no one at his place of residence to take calls.

Sources in Sudan have confirmed that Usamah Bin-Ladin was moved from his place of residence to another location, away from the attention, that his aides were also moved to the same location in southern Sudan, and that there were disagreements between the group and some Sudanese official because of the sudden move. Bin-Ladin, however, calmed the situation and, acting on a request by the Sudanese Government — which is trying to ease the harsh international sanctions imposed against it for sheltering several extremists accused of security crimes in several states — agreed to stay there to avoid attention. The Sudanese Government is currently trying to open channels of communication with those governments, and in particular the Egyptian Government, which have suffered from the extremist groups' actions. However, the failure so far to prove seriously that Usamah Bin-Ladin and his group have left its territory, and the failure to hand over the suspects in the assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, are preventing both sides from reaching an agreement.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Jatiya Party Support for Awami League Reported

BK1706154396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jatiya Party has formally requested the president to invite the Awami League, which has emerged as the largest party in the 12 June elections, to form the government. A letter in this regard, signed by acting Jatiya Party Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and party Secretary General Anwar Hossain Manju, was handed over to President Abdur Rahman Biswas today. The letter says that Hussain Mohammad Ershad, Jatiya Party chairman and former president, has given his consent to extending support to the Awami League to form the government.

Bangladesh: Chief Adviser Calls For Peaceful Repoll

BK1706160796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Adviser Mohammad Habibur Rahman has called upon the leaders of all political parties to extend all out cooperation for the peaceful process of repolling at 122 polling centers in 27 constituencies. In an exclusive interview with BSS in Dhaka today, he said the government has pledged to perform its constitutional responsibility of extending total cooperation to the Election Commission by remaining above all differences and by shunning all adverse situations. He said there is no doubt that the repolling will be held in a free and impartial manner.

The chief adviser said that foreign observers will observe the elections at all the centers. A sufficient number of police, paramilitary forces, and Bangladesh Rifles will be deployed at the polling centers. He added that members of the Armed Forces will also be placed on alert to assist the civil administration. The chief adviser said that, in addition to the government's alertness and the security measures it has taken, the most important factor in the peaceful conduct of elections is the vigilance of the people.

In reply to a question regarding allegations that have been brought against some deputy commissioners and police superintendents regarding the elections and the demand raised for their transfer, he said the election results do not prove these allegations. The chief adviser said that the election results clearly show that the voters cast their votes freely.

Bangladesh: BNP Offers To Free Ershad To Stop Awami League

BK1806101996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0955 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, June 18 (AFP) — Jailed former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad was offered freedom Tuesday and his wife the prime ministership in efforts by the former ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party to prevent the Awami League from forming a new government, a senior official source said.

But Ershad, who has already thrown his Jatiya Party's support to the Awami League, said he would not accept parole offered by the former rulers and would wait for courts to decide his fate, a party source said.

Ershad is serving a 13-year jail term for graft and he has appealed his convictions to the Supreme Court.

His wife, Raushan, met with Bangladeshi President Abdur Rahman Biswas, leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which promised her the prime ministership if her party joined with BNP to form a new government, a senior official source told AFP.

He also offered parole to her husband, the source said.

"The president has signed the parole order and it was (now pending) with the caretaker government chief," one senior official source told AFP, without elaborating.

But JP sources said Ershad would not deal with the BNP, which he blamed for jailing him and blocking his release before the elections.

In addition, former prime minister Khaleda Zia has reportedly met with some pro-BNP Jatiya leaders, promising them benefits if they could bring the JP over to the BNP.

Despite the manueverings, Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League appears to be set to form a new government and make Wajed the prime minister.

The League emerged as the single largest party in the 300-member parliament in last week's crucial general elections and still has an outside chance for an absolute majority when repolling in 27 constituencies is held Wednesday.

But even without a majority, the support of the Jatiya Party should be enough for it to form a new government.

Wajed made her first contact with President Biswas by telephone late Monday, informing him of her readiness to form the government, but the president said he could only invite her to do so once the repolling was over, officials said.

Wajed was quoted by the independent newspaper Tuesday as saying she would not seek revenge against the killers of her father, Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Rahman and most of his family was killed in a 1975 military coup which toppled the post-independence Awami League government.

"I, myself, and my party do not believe in the politics of revenge and killing," said Wajed, who was out the country with her younger sister during the coup.

India

India: Congress To Oppose State Governments of UF Members

BK1406133496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 14 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress high command has asked its state units to work as effective opposition in the states where constituent parties of the United Front [UF] are ruling. At the extended working committee meeting in New Delhi today, the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, said the state units have the right to oppose the governments in states like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

Party sources said the state units have accepted the high command's decision to support the United Front government at the center but were opposed to the idea of the party joining the government at any stage.

All members of the working committee, pradesh [state] Congress chiefs, leaders of the state legislature parties, and leaders of frontal organizations are attending the meeting.

India: Congress Leader Rules Out Joining United Front Government

BK1406163396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 14 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, has said while the party would support the United Front government at the center, it will continue to act as a strong opposition party in the states not being ruled by it. In his opening remarks at the extended Congress Working Committee [CWC] meeting in New Delhi today, Mr. Rao said there is no question of joining the United Front government as the CWC resolution was only about its support from outside. He said this resolution has expressed the view that only secular parties should govern the country.

Mr. Narasimha Rao said local rather than national issues were the reasons for the party's poor performance in the Lok Sabha elections. Speakers at the meeting said that the alienation of dalits [downtrodden people] and minorities, loss of contact with young people, and failure of the party to communicate the policies and programs of the Narasimha Rao government to the people were among the other reasons.

The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newsmen that it appears that the party has reached an agreement in principle with the BSP [Bahujan Samaj Party] chief for alliance in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. He said yesterday the CWC had discussed the Uttarakhand issue and decided to hold another CWC meeting on the subject. The CWC is also meeting tomorrow.

India: Congress Party's 'Secret Plans' To Name Rao President Noted

BK1706104896 Madras DINAMALAR in Tamil 5 Jun 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Translated Text] New Delhi, 5 June. The Congress Party has extended its 'unconditional' support to the Deve Gowda government in order to accomplish its three secret plans, which include appointing Narasimha Rao as president. The Congress Party was shocked to learn about the disclosure of the report that said Narasimha Rao would accomplish his secret plans by engineering dramatic turn of events one after another. Narasimha Rao has instituted an inquiry regarding the leaking of this report, which was discussed at a high-level.

It is learned that the Congress Party intends to form a United Congress by bringing in all the old Congress leaders, including Deve Gowda and Ramakrishna Hegde, to see that no matter what, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] does not form the government at the center in the next general elections.

The Congress Party has extended its support to the Deve Gowda government. Chosen by 13 parties, on behalf of the United Front, Deve Gowda was appointed prime minister. In all, these 13 parties have 201 members in Parliament. The Congress Party has 136 MP's. Only with the support of these two entities, can Deve Gowda pull on with full strength. The support of Congress Party's 136 MP's is indispensable to the United Front. Should the Congress Party withdraw its support, it would imply the collapse of the Deve Gowda government.

Nevertheless, the aim of the Congress Party is different. Through their secret plans, the Congress Party members have shown that they are not idiots who would extend their support with no benefit. These secret plans are: make Narasimha Rao president in next year's presidential elections with the support of the United Front; secure the post of deputy prime minister, and five important ministries; strengthen the Congress Party in order to topple Deve Gowda, and face elections again.

The Congress Party leadership took meticulous care to see that these secret plans were not divulged. The party acted carefully as it was aware of the danger should the United Front learn of its intentions. That is why several Congress leaders have, time and again, emphatically stated that they would extend unconditional support to the Deve Gowda government from outside.

The exposure of the Congress Party's long-term secret plans has created a major embarrassment to the party president, Narasimha Rao. The secret plan to reinvigorate the party and seize power at the center was only discussed among certain important leaders. Narasimha Rao was stunned over the leaking of the news at this juncture. It is reported that he has formed a small committee to investigate the matter. Pledging unconditional support and permitting such misleading reports to circulate at present will give rise to unnecessary suspicions. Therefore, Narasimha Rao is very much keen to put an end to this.

Because of this, Narasimha Rao may make a categorical announcement within a day or two. Rao is expected to announce that there is no change in the Congress Party's decision to extend unconditional support from outside to the Deve Gowda government.

By making such announcement, the Congress Party can silence Deve Gowda as well as the United Front. At the same time, it is thinking about reviewing its secret plans in its own way.

At any cost, the Congress Party will not withdraw its support to the Deve Gowda government for another three years. Political observers are of the opinion that the Congress Party's efforts to implement its secret plans within this period and to strengthen its base has already started at many levels.

Only a few of the United Front's constituent parties like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam have their origin from the states. Most of the regional parties were formed by those who seceded from the Congress Party. If the Congress Party has to emerge stronger again, all those parties should be amalgamated. Some Congress leaders opposed to Narasimha Rao feel that a strong Congress Party can be created by drawing in old Congress leaders, including Deve Gowda and Ramakrishna Hegde, from other parties. Is it possible to achieve this goal? These leaders contend that it is possible.

The Congress Party should emerge as a strong opposition party at state level. At the same time, efforts should be made to attract leaders like Deve Gowda and Ramakrishna Hegde. Thereafter, by facing elections under the new leadership, the BJP's dreams to recapture power can be shattered. As there was unity this time to prevent the BJP from coming to power, the same situation might be there during the next general elections also. Only after visualizing all this, the Congress Party has formulated a plan to create the 'United Congress.'

Now, there may be doubt as to whether the old Congressmen will endorse the formation of a United Congress. An answer to this perplexity will be available once Narasimha Rao takes over as the president. In the absence of Narasimha Rao, others will not hesitate to merge with the Congress Party. It seems that although some leaders like V.P. Singh may oppose the idea, there is a scope for others to endorse it.

When the news about Congress Party's secret plans surfaced, Deve Gowda became nervous. That is why, even while speaking to newsmen in Bangalore, he said hesitatingly: The Congress Party has pledged its unconditional support. We do not know whether it will join the ministry. Let us see.

V.P. Singh was the one who was most infuriated over this matter. He said: We cannot look to the Congress Party for everything. We cannot compromise on our principles for Congress Party's support.

Irritants have merely begun surfacing. This will unnerve the Deve Gowda government. Turmoil is not something new to the Congress Party. It has the capacity to turn any turmoil to its favor. It seems that the Congress Party has commenced its political game.

India: Congress Says Support to Government for Political Stability

BK1806093796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The AICC [All India Congress Committee] General Secretary, Mr. Devendra Dwivedi, has said the Congress support to the United Front government is for political stability in the country. Addressing a news conference in Bhopal today, he said his party wants the government to last for five years, but if it fails, it will not be because of the Congress. Mr. Dwivedi asserted that the entire party is behind the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao. He stated Mr. Rao need not resign from the party presidentship only on the basis of an FIR [First Information Report] filed against him in the JMM [Jharkhand Mukti Morcha] bribery case. The AICC general secretary also said the party's poll adjustment with the BSP [Bahujan Samaj Party] is only in respect of Uttar Pradesh and that too the efforts in this regard are in a preliminary stage.

India: Gujral's Comments on CTBT, Burma's SAARC Membership Viewed

BK1706163296 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 17 Jun 96 p 9

[Article by K.P. Nayar: "Myanmar, Afghanistan Crucial in SAARC"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India is keen on bringing Myanmar [Burma] and Afghanistan into the framework of South Asian regional cooperation, External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral said here today.

In an exclusive interview to The Indian Express, he said the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) should eventually work out active links with the Gulf states and Central Asia if the process of South Asian cooperation is to be meaningful.

"The difficulties in incorporating both Myanmar and Afghanistan into the South Asian framework are internal. But once the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and the proposed free trade area in the region take off, I hope there will be enough temptation for the two countries to overcome these difficulties and cooperate", Gujral said.

He said a final decision on bringing them into the SAARC framework would be that of all the member states, but India wanted to float the idea for consideration by other countries in the region.

"Economic cooperation is vital in the post-Cold War era. SAARC has travel led some distance, but it needs to pursue its objectives with greater vigour. It will help if regional cooperation is expanded", Gujral argued.

Gujral's mention of Myanmar in this context is significant in view of active efforts by Western countries — particularly the US to ostracise the military regime in Yangon.

Asian countries, especially the ASEAN, have been opposed to the idea of isolating Myanmar, and instead, prefer the constructive engagement of the military Government there.

With the External Affairs Minister coming out in favour of constructively engaging the military regime, India has also thrown its weight behind the dominant Asian view against the ostracism of Myanmar.

Gujral's references to Afghanistan are being interpreted here as reflecting a growing desire by India to play a more active and more positive role in enabling Afghanistan to tide over its critical internal problems.

It is also indicative of the growing confidence in New Delhi that the worst is over in Afghanistan, where Pakistan tried to usurp power through its proxy the Taliban militia — much to chagrin of other countries in the region like India and Iran.

Gujral said the final stand that India will take at the ongoing negotiations in Geneva for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) will represent a national consensus on the issue.

Towards this end, he will be consulting political leaders from all sides in the next few days. An all-party meeting to finalise India's position was also being considered.

"The ultimate criteria for what we do in Geneva will be national interest. The nuclear powers are unwilling to go along with India on nuclear disarmament. So we will have to look out for our own security interests", he added.

Significantly, the Minister hinted that the Government was now looking at CTBT not merely as an instrument of disarmament, but also as a yardstick for national security.

"The nuclear tests have not stopped even at this stage of the CTBT talks. They add to our concern about India's security", he pointed out.

Asked if the previous Government's policy of keeping the nuclear option had any meaning now that the CTBT was a virtual reality, the Minister said: "Keeping the nuclear option open means we have to respond to any emerging situation".

"It does not mean that we have to take a decision tomorrow. The type of weaponry that we acquire should match the threat perception. There is no threat to the nation today that warrants testing a bomb, but if there is a nuclear threat to India, we will have to review our decision on not testing".

Gujral, who is meeting US Ambassador Frank Wisner on Monday, said that there have been contradictory reports on whether Pakistan had actually deployed the M-11 missiles acquired from China. "There is no authentic assessment as yet on this".

He said India's missile programme was indigenous and that its scientific and technological capabilities have now been established. "All subsequent steps relating to the missile programme will have to respond to the security perceptions both in the long and short run".

On the proposed talks with Pakistan, Gujral said India was awaiting a response from Pakistan so that the timing and agenda for the dialogue could be finalised. Apart from the exchange of letters, there has been no contact between the two sides he said.

On India's bid for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council this year, Gujral described the prospects as "hopeful". He said Indian envoys were travelling around the world seeking support. "Our case is very valid. It is unfortunate that Japan has stepped in as a rival."

India: BJP Wants Government To Develop Prithvi, Agni Missiles

BK1406132896 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 14 Jun 96 p 10

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) today urged the government to take serious note of the threat to national security by Pakistan's deployment of the Chinese M-11 nuclear missiles.

In a statement, party General Secretary Sushma Swaraj said the missiles were supplied to Pakistan in 1993 in contravention of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Pakistan was reported to be in possession of nuclear warhead. "The BJP has consistently pointed out the nexus of Pakistan and China in the fields of nuclear weapons and missile delivery system and the consequent grave dangers threatening our national security," she said.

The BJP wants the government to expedite production of Prithvi missiles and their supply to the Army and the Air Force. The Agni 11 missile should be produced on a priority basis and the longer range Agni II missile should be developed. The nuclear warheads should be developed for the Indian missile systems.

India: New Finance Minister Lists Priorities in 'First' Interview

BK1606120396 Singapore THE SUNDAY TIMES in English 16 Jun 96

[Report by Ravi Velloor — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] June 16, 1996 — India's new Finance Minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, has indicated that he has an open mind on foreign investments flowing into its consumer goods sector while stressing that the government's priorities are on funnelling funds into the core infrastructure areas.

"We identify the core areas as power, oil, telecom, railways and ports. As long as the bulk of investments goes to the core sector that is okay with us," he said yesterday in a telephone interview. The 13-party United Front government led by Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda had raised some apprehension after its Common Minimum Programme said it would restrict outside investment in what it called low priority sectors.

But Mr. Chidambaram indicated that the government was approaching the issue with an open mind — it had yet to draw up its list of low priority industries and the nation had a "huge and growing middle class with a hunger after goods and services".

In any case, "what is low priority in 1996 may become high priority four years later", he said. "I don't think there is anything that can be frozen for all times to come as 'low priority'." Aides said it was the first interview granted to a reporter since the 50-year-old lawyer and Harvard MBA [Masters in Business Administration] took charge of the prestigious ministry earlier this month.

Mr. Chidambaram agreed on the understanding that he would not be queried on matters relating to the annual budget he is to present in Parliament next month, a reason he has shied away from the press.

A frequent visitor here, he will make his international debut as Finance Minister this week at the Singapore-hosted Global Indian Entrepreneurs Conference.

Part of his agenda is to strengthen the profit-making public sector — or government-linked — companies and give them maximum autonomy of operation.

Loss-making units would be divested or given over to private sector management.

Mr. Chidambaram praised the Republic's handling of its infrastructure, particularly its ports and road management, while noting his own challenges in laying down a policy for India.

"We are a federation of 25 States and seven Union Territories. It is a different ball game from a city-state."

He said his first priority was to control the fiscal deficit. "Once you do that everything else comes under control. Last year we ended the budget with a deficit of 5.9 percent."

He said he would be happy if he could keep the deficit at 5 percent: "That would be a significant reduction." Asked how he would succeed in doing that given the United Front's emphasis on several programmes targeted at farmers and the rural poor that could involve heavy subsidies, he said the government would stress both high economic growth and social justice.

The government was projecting GDP [Gross Domestic Product] growth of 7 percent, industrial growth of over 12 percent and attracting foreign direct investment flows of U.S.$10 billion (S [Singapore] $14 billion) a year.

"We cannot have money for social development unless there is growth," he stressed, adding: "Growth is meaningless unless it deals with the problems of the poor. For example, who wants jobless growth?

"The task of any finance minister is to balance these objectives when it is obvious that both objectives have large constituencies in India. You can't address one and ignore the other."

He was confident of attaining the targeted foreign investment flows, despite the stiff competition for funds from large Asian countries such as China and Indonesia.

"There is enough money in the world to take care of Indonesia's needs, China's needs and India's needs given the fact that in calendar 95 there have been U.S. $325 billion of direct foreign investment flows.

"What is it that India wants? Maximum 10 per cent of this," he said.

India: Cabinet Committees on Political, Economic Affairs Named

BK1706091096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda, has constituted two cabinet committees for giving shape to major political decisions. They are the cabinet committee on economic affairs and the cabinet committee on political affairs. Both the committees are headed by the prime minister.

The cabinet committee on political affairs include the external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral; the defense minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav; the finance minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram; the welfare minister, Mr. Balwant Singh Ramoowalia; and the civil aviation minister, Mr. C.M. Ibrahim.

The cabinet committee on economic affairs includes the industry minister, Murasoli Maran; the commerce minister, Mr. Devendra Prasad Yadav; the finance minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram; and the rural areas and employment minister, Mr. Yarram Naidu.

According to PTI, the prime minister has indicated that a limited expansion of his council of ministers will take place on Wednesday [19 June]. Mr. Deve Gowda, while talking to newsmen in New Delhi today, said the representatives of the CPI [Communist Party of India] and the Asom Gana Parishad [AGP] will be included in the ministry. He also welcomed the decision of the AGP to join the government.

Iran

Iran: Tehran 'Fully Respects' Outcome of Russian Elections

LD1806081696 Tehran IRNA in English 0652 GMT 18 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, June 18, IRNA — Deputy Foreign Minister for Euro-American Affairs Mahmud Va'ezi said that Iran "fully respects the verdicts of Russians as manifested in Sunday's [16 Jun] elections for president."

In an interview with the morning daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed Tuesday [18 Jun] he expressed Iran's official point of view on the Russian elections.

"We respect the Russian voters' verdict they gave in the presidential elections," he said, adding for Iran it would make no difference, as Russian cooperation with the Islamic republic will continue no matter who wins.

On Iran's view in the face of Western support for Yeltsin, he stated that Irano-Russian relations have reached a point of no return and they are bound to grow in the years to come.

Va'ezi, in charge of Euro-American affairs, said that the change in the Kremlin will have no adverse impact on the evergrowing Irano-Russian ties.

"We not only have economic and [words indistinct] and the Caucasus," he said recalling the combined efforts of Tehran and Moscow in silencing the guns in Nagorno-Karabakh in the Azerbaijan Republic and in Tajikistan.

On continuation of Iran's cooperation if Zyuganov wins the Kremlin seat, he noted, "I think we won't have any problems."

Yeltsin, despite incredible pressure from the U.S., kept national interest on top and fulfilled Moscow's commitments, Va'ezi said adding "Zyuganov will definitely continue ever-expanded cooperation with Iran."

Iran: Commentary on Repercussions of Netanyahu's Election

LD1406175896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 14 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Zionist regime's prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, warned 'Arafat supporters, on Thursday 13 June, after the publication of reports on the allegations of 'Arafat's security forces. The security forces had informed Netanyahu that the self-rule Palestinian government had lost its popularity due to the pressures resulting from the prohibition of the shift of Palestinians in the occupied lands; adding that the control of the opposition groups to the so-called Middle East peace process would be difficult for them.

The election of Binyamin Netanyahu as the new Zionist regime's prime minister has created great concern among the Arab scene, especially the officials of the Palestinian self-rule government. Also, halting the implementation of the pre-signed agreements between the self-rule Palestinian government and the Zionist regime has upset the Palestinians more than ever. The unsuitable behavior of the Zionist regime with Palestinians intensifies this state. The non-evacuation of the city of al-Khalil [Hebron], where 120,000 Palestinians live, as well as the economic problems resulting from the limitations on the shift of Palestinians inside the occupied lands are some of the self-rule Palestinian government's problems.

Meanwhile al-Khalil's municipality has threatened that in case of the non-evacuation of al-Khalil, Palestinians may be forced to join the intifadah to gain access to their rights. Although the political experts say that the hostilities of the Zionist regime's prime minister on the so-called peace process is a new effort to gain more points from Arabs, however, the breach of agreements is one of the long-lasting traditions among Zionist officials. This has caused great concern among Arabs and Palestinians. Such a stance has led to the weakening of 'Arafat's stance toward compromise with the Zionist regime. This is why al-Khalil's municipality has warned the Zionist regime's prime minister to strengthen the intifadah and anti-Zionist operations if the agreements are breached. [sentence as heard]

Iran: Editorial Views Arab Reaction to Likud Party Victory

LD1506140596 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 12 Jun 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Contradictory Reactions!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The victory of the warmongering Likud Party in the occupied Palestine elections has led to two completely contradictory reactions from the Arab world. The reactionary camp in the Arab world, in a submissive and impotent gesture, has hurriedly expressed its concern and fear. It has also been sending messages of peace and friendship to the occupiers, in a bid to show them the green light.

On the other hand, the Islamic resistance forces have also shown a clear reaction to the recent elections. By carrying out a number of operations against the occupiers they have conveyed their message quite clearly.

These operations in fact declared the Hezbollah's position towards changes in the government of the occupied Palestine. The message here was that the forces of Hezbollah and the Islamic resistance will continue to remain indifferent to any change in the government or the leading personalities of the occupied Palestine and will continue their anti-occupation operations until southern Lebanon is completely purged of the filthy presence of the Zionist occupiers. What they are engaged in is, in fact, a legitimate and proud struggle, which is sanctioned by the world's freedom-loving nations and personalities.

The above mentioned reactions have themselves led to some interesting consequences. The Likud Party has chosen to largely ignore the submissive posture of the reactionary Arabs. They have preferred to ignore the hasty maneuvers of this camp and keep everything unclear and unambiguous so that the compromise camp itself may eventually volunteer to grant them further concessions. However, the Zionists cannot simply ignore what is happening in southern Lebanon. After all, around 20 Zionist soldiers were killed recently in southern Lebanon within a very short span of time. The above figure is a warning to the warmongering Likud Party leaders who have actually told the decisionmaking bodies of the occupying regime that the present situation in southern Lebanon cannot be sustained for much longer.

Netanyahu, the leader of the warmongering Likud government, has acknowledged the impotence of the Zionist Army in southern Lebanon, stating that he firmly believes that the Zionist regime is facing difficult conditions in that sector. Moreover, the Israeli deputy war minister has confessed to the total debacle of the Israeli Army's 16-day offensive against Lebanon. He has said that Israel has had nothing but defeats and setbacks in Lebanon during the last 25 years.

Nonetheless, some Arab regimes have lost their nerve, and with their submissive reactions, have in fact enticed the Zionists to demand more concessions.

However, despite their lack of a sophisticated army and weapons, the oppressed people of Lebanon and the Islamic resistance movement have made the enemy tremble with fear, forcing even the warmongering Likud Party to confess to its impotence in the face of the anti-occupation operations.

Even the Likud government cannot justify the continued presence of Israeli forces in southern Lebanon to world public opinion. In reality, the presence of Zionist soldiers in Lebanon should be viewed within the wider framework of the occupation process. In other words, the Zionist soldiers should not really be there. If they choose to remain, then they should be prepared to be attacked by the Lebanese Islamic resistance. After all, every nation has the right to confront invaders and force them to leave its territory. However, if the occupiers insist on staying, then the nation has every right to try to eliminate the invading force, in the same way that a number of Israeli soldiers have been killed by resistance forces in recent days.

One wishes that the leaders of the Arab world's reactionary camp enjoyed only a fraction of the courage and devotion with which the young combatants of the Lebanese Islamic resistance are endowed. One wishes that these leaders would stop degrading themselves and put an end to their quest for a compromise with the occupiers. One wishes that they could grasp the realities and return to the warm embrace of their nations, so that they can join hands and rout the Zionist occupiers.

Iran Complains To UN Over U.S. 'Violations' in Gulf

LD1706220596 Tehran IRNA in English 2146 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] United Nations Hq. (New York), June 17, IRNA — Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Dr. Kamal Kharrazi in a letter to the U.N. Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali here today listed U.S. violations against Iranian interests in the Persian Gulf.

He said that on 27 January 1996 between 11:30 and 11:45 hours, the U.S. warship Grubkeiv 69GC at the position of 7 miles north of Abu Zar oil platform, radar locked an Iranian battleship whose position was 2915n and 4927e for a period of one minute. At the same time the U.S. aircraft PBF got closer to the Iranian battleship 'Tabarzin' and locked its radar for a period of one minute, wrote the letter.

The letter said: "The U.S. government's actions of creating nuisances and violating the airspace and territorial sea of Iran have been a hindrance for the Islamic Republic of Iran's sea patrolling aircraft and helicopters in performing their assigned duties. Such measures are nothing but a clear indication of the violation of the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

As other instances of American provocations, Kharrazi's letter cited the 8 February 1996 incident when an Iranian helicopter with registration Mark EP-HTK, in flight from Fruzan oil platform to Bushehr, was forced to return to the platform due to the frequent warnings and preventive measures of the U.S. warships.

Iran: Commentary Assails British Policies in Persian Gulf

LD1706115996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1000 GMT 17 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary: "Britain is Trying To Divide and Rule"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following divisive remarks by the British ambassador to Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran summoned the British charge d'affaires in Tehran to protest the British ambassador's statement and ask for an explanation.

In a news conference last week in Riyadh, the British ambassador made allegations of Iranian support for the opposition in Bahrain, and further portrayed Iran as a country that promoted insecurity in the Persian Gulf. He also claimed that Britain is prepared to cooperate with Persian Gulf countries against this threat to security.

The ambassador made his remarks at a time when Charles Masefield, head of Britain's Defense Export Services, is visiting Saudi Arabia to try to reduce Saudi mistrust of British policies and to encourage the signing of military pacts between the two countries.

Relations between Britain and Saudi Arabia have been suffering from tension for some time now because Muhammad al-Mas'ari, a Saudi dissident, is residing in London. Saudi Arabia has repeatedly called on London to expel this Arab dissident, but Britain has not responded positively.

Earlier this year, Saudi Arabia said that if Britain does not change its policy toward Riyadh, it would nullify all its agreements with Britain. British officials are now trying, on the one hand, to prevent any unexpected Saudi reaction, and on the other hand, to sign new military pacts and agreements with the shaykdoms of the Persian Gulf.

In his remarks last week, the British ambassador portrayed Iran as a cause of tension in the region and went on to say that his country is prepared to sign military agreements with the littoral states of the Persian Gulf.

As an exporter of military hardware, Britain is trying to hold on to the arms markets of these littoral states which for many years were protectorates of British colonialism.

Thus, Britain is trying its traditional policy of creating divisions among countries, advocating mistrust, and causing insecurity in the Persian Gulf in order to encourage them to expand their relations with London and to purchase arms from Britain.

Britain hopes that this policy will prevent Riyadh from implementing its threat of nullifying its military agreements with Britain and will prepare the ground for new ones.

The British policy of deceit, which looted regional resources for many years, is now clearly understood by the Muslim people of the region.

If in the view of the above facts, regional governments were to decide to adopt independent policies, they would be able to prevent colonial powers exercising hegemony in the region. If they do not do this, they will be deceived by the great powers and help them achieve their aims.

Iran: Paper—U.S. Blames Iran for Bahrain, Other Terrorist Acts

LD1506164796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 11 Jun 96 p 16

[Political commentary by Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh: "Manama Fabrications Are Built on Sand"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A week ago reports from the Bahraini capital, Manama, said that a group of youths, armed with two machine guns and a handful of grenades, attempted a coup, or armed insurgency, against the Al Khalifah government. The Bahrain Government's scenario ends like this: that the group were arrested and in a television program introduced itself as the trained hirelings of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The actions taken by the Bahrain Government and the propaganda climate created by the Western politico-news circles, the Zionists, and the reactionary Arabs regarding those actions, seem to be a familiar script.

The calendar of crises and pressures on the Al Khalifah government, its reactive decisions in the face of those developments — in particular attacks against Tehran — are reminiscent of former and recent incidents. The genuineness of the crises must not be doubted. But the fabrications and the reactions are in line with the principle of diverting attention from realities. In the last few years, particularly during the tedious power struggle in the White House, on several separate occasions cases were fabricated against Iran. After any sabotage or act of opposition — or as it is called act of terrorism — the Democrats and Republicans would whip up a climate of false propaganda against Iran. The two explosions at the Zionist regime's diplomatic mission in Buenos Aires and the Jewish center in Argentina were attributed to Iran. In America's biggest explosion in Oklahoma — the destruction of a federal building — Iran was initially blamed. Files were fabricated against Iran but eventually the clues were unravelled. On the one hand the clues pointed to Zionist circles and, on the other, they drew the curtain up on America's acute domestic crises which were rooted in that government's mistaken foreign policies and their negative effects on the people's psyche, in particular that of the military. Eventually, the events force America into silence and Argentina to an apology.

Moreover, the case of the bomb explosion at the American military headquarters in Saudi Arabia, which brought several accusations against Iran, ended by revealing the reality of the Saudi people's dissatisfaction regarding the presence of aliens. Tel Aviv also has embarked dozens of times on creating an adverse atmosphere. The unlucky Rabin and Peres governments tried to compensate for their security incapabilities by diversionary attacks against Iran. On several occasions the Israeli media put out scenarios against Iran like those of Bahrain. Rabin's assassination and Peres's electoral defeat showed that the Zionists consider their statesmen as the factor in the existing security weakness. In the recent elections in occupied territories "security" was the criterion.

The revolt in Bahrain is an uprising against dictatorship at home. The Palestinian movement also is a genuine struggle against foreign domination. Peres failed to use his "Iran hypothesis" to cover up his Achilles heel in Palestine and southern Lebanon and he was sidestepped. Now the "Iran case" seems to be the last stand for the Al Khalifahs but it is built on sand. The ending of that hypothesis will isolate the illegitimate and confined power-pyramid in Manama in the face of the internal realities of the Bahraini community. Al Khalifah is running away from realism instead of embracing it. Dr. Mansur al-Jamri, one of the opposition leaders in Bahrain, considers the Manama government's claims that it has identified and exposed a network of saboteurs in this emirate as baseless and imaginary. He says: In order to cover up its incapability in securing people's just demands, the government is resorting to blatant lies and under various pretexts imprisons a large number of Bahraini people every day.

Under present conditions, the only course for resolving Bahrain's crisis is to adopt a realistic approach towards the crisis, pay attention to the people's just demands, stop following the divisive Zionist, American, and reactionary-Arab propaganda and respond positively to the good will of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: UN Official Hails Iran's Mediation Role in Tajik Crisis

LD1706171896 Tehran IRNA in English 1640 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dushanbe, June 17, IRNA — The United Nations special envoy to Tajikistan Gerd Dietrich Merrem in Dushanbe on Sunday [16 Jun] appreciated the constructive role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the peaceful settlement of inter-Tajik crisis. In a meeting with Iranian ambassador to Dushanbe 'Ali Ashraf Mojtahed Shabestari on Sunday, Merrem said the Islamic Republic of Iran as peacemaker has helped hold five rounds of peace talks on Tajikistan and succeeded in bringing closer the views of the belligerent parties. Merrem noted that the United Nations has planned to resume peace talks on Tajikistan and establish a lasting ceasefire to prepare ground for a permanent peace in the republic in cooperation with the regional countries including Iran.

Mojtahed Shabestari voiced Iran's readiness to go on mediation efforts in Tajikistan, adding that Iran has maintained its impartiality in inter-Tajik talks and the ceasefire brokered last year in Tehran is an indication of Iran's good intention.

The U.N. special envoy has recently held negotiations with the opposition leaders and representatives of the observer nations monitoring inter-Tajik peace talks.

Iran: Paper on Prospects of Cooperation in Afghanistan

LD1406190396 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 9 Jun 96 p 2

[Editorial: "A Comprehensive Regional Effort Needed for Afghan Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Last Thursday's [13 Jun] negotiations between three Afghan Mojahedin factions with radical Taleban failed and produced no favourable results for peace in that landlocked country. Former religious students are to be blamed for the lost opportunity.

Following a new shift in alliances in which President Borhanoddin Rabbani and his former enemy Golboddin Hekmatyar buried the hatchet last month, the four factions and the Taleban met in Kandahar. The meeting was held at the request of the Taleban in a move which observers say was immature and initiated hastily.

The four factions were Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] of Yunus Khales group, Hezb-e Mahaz-e Meli (National Resistance Party) led by Pir Ahmad Gaylani, Harakat-e Eslami [Islamic Revolutionary Movement] led by Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi and the National Liberation Front led by former Afghan President Sebghatollah Mojaddedi. Mohammadi sent his representative in the Kandahar parleys.

Observers in Iran were sceptical on the success of the Kandahar meeting because of the participants' contradictory outlooks and conflicting interests.

The simple fact is that Hekmatyar's re-entry in the Rabbani government could change the balance of power in Kabul. To counter the new alliance in Kabul, the Kandahar meeting was slated to form a stronger front which became a mission impossible because there was no common ground for association of Taleban's leader Mawlawi Molla Mohammad Omar with Gaylani, Mohammadi and Mojaddedi who follow the middle-of-the-road policy based on non-violent struggle. Gaylani and Mohammadi are in contact with the former King Zaher Shah who is living in exile in Italy. Even before the Kandahar meeting experts on Afghan affairs declared that the Taleban's hurried move will prove to be a desperate one.

The biggest problem in Afghanistan, after the withdrawal of the Soviet forces, has been the existence of a wide range of ideologies and convictions. Now Hekmatyar's renewed pact with Rabbani, after more than two years of his absence from Kabul, opens the doors for other factions to join them. The new alliance, after adopting a middle-of-the-road policy, can very well attract other factions such as those of Mojaddedi, Gen. Dostam, Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity party] led by Karim Khalili Gaylani and Mohammadi. These factions should not waste time in joining the newly formed alliance in Kabul for broader interest of the Afghan people.

It is also necessary to remind Pakistan once more that it should cooperate with Iran in its efforts to iron out differences between the former foes. For that it is necessary for Pakistan to abandon the support it has been extending to the Taleban.

As a piece of advice, we would like to say to our Foreign Ministry to continue its peace efforts but solicit and encourage the support of all the regional countries for bringing peace to neighbouring Afghanistan.

Iran: Commentary Criticizes Growing Turkish-Israeli Cooperation

LD1706143396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 17 Jun 96

[Unattributed commentary; as heard throughout]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Turkey has ratified, on Sunday 16 June, its agreement with the Zionist regime on free trade. The agreement had been signed between the two sides during Turkish President Suleyman Demirel's March visit to occupied Palestine.

Based on the agreement, diversification of trade and the expansion of economic, industrial, and technological cooperation between Tel Aviv and Ankara will be carried out in a five-year period. The elimination of double taxation and the gradual omission of customs restrictions on the two sides' commercial goods (?until) the year 2000 (?toward) the promotion of mutual investment are the other articles of the free trade agreement between the two sides.

The previously signed agreement between Turkey and the illegitimate Zionist regime was ratified by the Turkish Government despite the highly negative reactions by the powerful opposition parties because of what they see as adverse international consequences of such an agreement for their country. A case in point is the Islamic Welfare Party, which is the biggest political party in Turkey at the moment and vigorously opposed to the free trade agreement between Turkey and the unscrupulous Zionist regime at the same time.

Undoubtedly, one of the implications of the agreement between the Turkish Government and the Zionist entity will be the surrender of the Arab countries' share of water which passes through Turkey to the Zionist regime, because the Zionist regime is short of water resources. Sending Turkish water to the occupied lands can intensify the disagreements between Turkey and Syria and Iraq, and will further threaten insecurity in the region.

According to the economic experts of the region, the contracts for commercial cooperation and investment signed between the Zionist regime and other regional countries such as Turkey is intended at strengthening and consolidating the stance of the Zionists and to establish a psychological atmosphere in the region to the benefit of the Zionist regime. Meanwhile, it seems that signing these agreements will not meet the long term interests of the regional countries, especially Turkey, because the Zionist regime has proved in the last 50 years that it only places importance on its own interests in the region and on weakening the Muslim regional countries.

Recently the leader of the Turkish Islamic Welfare Party Necmettin Erbakan has (?to establish a cabinet). If the Welfare Party comes to power in Turkey, the Turkish contract with the Zionist regime will be reconsidered. Meanwhile, the rush of the Turkish government to ratify the commercial contract with the Zionists under this framework is to be evaluated.

Iran: Syria Warns Against Separating Peace Tracks

MM1706140496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Jun 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Ghassan Bin-Jiddu: "Syria Tells Iran That It Will 'Censure' Anyone Who Tries To Separate Lebanese and Syrian Tracks"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — An authoritative political source in Tehran has told AL-HAYAH that the Syrian leadership told Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati during his recent visit to Damascus that the facts available to it confirm that the Israeli-U.S. plan for the peace process will in future focus primarily on separating the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in the negotiations. The source added that this aim will be the common denominator between the new Israeli Government and the U.S. Administration, just as it was one of the aims of the Israeli Operation, Grapes of Wrath, against Lebanon. The source reiterated that the Syrian leadership "stressed its insistence on not separating the two tracks, saying that it will censure any Lebanese quarter seeking to get involved in any way in the attempt to separate the two tracks."

Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati visited Damascus suddenly last Sunday, [16 Jun] where he handed President Hafiz al-Asad a letter from President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressing "Iran's support for the Syrian stand" against any pressures exerted on Damascus after Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu's victory in the Israeli elections.

The Iranian source noted that his information indicated that Damascus "expressed its alarm" at the political move made by the Lebanese prime minister during the recent Israeli aggression. The source said that the open disagreement that emerged between Hizballah and al-Hariri some time ago and also President al-Hirawi's statement about "shaky" relations between Lebanon and Iran "received the approval of Damascus, which wanted to send two messages at the same time: one to al-Hariri, who crossed some red lines through his political move, and another to Iran, which proved its presence as a regional power with a considerable role in Lebanon."

The political source said that Syria can allow al-Hariri to deal with any files in the country except the political file, especially when it concerns issues that are "extremely sensitive to Syria and whose effects impact on the region as a whole."

The source said that the "political and diplomatic stardom" displayed by al-Hariri during that period "could have constituted a nucleus for Lebanese foreign policy to marginalize coordination with Syria, especially in the light of French support for him and the U.S. incitement to weaken Syrian-Lebanese coordination." The source added that Damascus sent a small signal to al-Hariri when (Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq) al-Shar' accompanied (Lebanese Foreign Minister) Faris Buwayz on his plane from Beirut to Latakia to meet with President Hafiz al-Asad. The source stated that the fierce criticisms of al-Hariri by Hizballah leaders, especially Hasan Nasrallah, "did not alarm Syria much, though it did make efforts to calm the atmosphere later." The source said that his information from the Syrian capital indicates that al-Hariri's decision not to participate in the upcoming parliamentary elections "is not attributable to field factors placing al-Hariri at the bottom of the Sunni leaders in Beirut, but actually to a request from Syria, as Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim [Khaddam] informed him of the futility of his candidacy." However, the source revealed that the Iranian leadership "does not approve of tension in the relationship between al-Hariri and Hizballah." The source stressed that Iran's "advice" to Hizballah leaders contributed to calming the atmosphere and dealing with all local issues on the basis of a strategic view. The source added that Iranian diplomacy pursued the same policy to calm the situation when President al-Hirawi made the statements critical of Iran. He said: "Without doubt these statements were made as a result of external pressures, especially from the United States. We understand the official Lebanese position, but some people in Tehran believe that al-Hirawi's statement was a Syrian, rather than Lebanese, message to Iran." The source pointed to the Iranian role during the recent Israeli aggression, especially Velayati's role in imposing Iran as "a regional player." The source stressed that Iran was very keen for France to play a role in securing a solution "lest the United States seize all cards. Some circles in Iran see this as an important political achievement for Iran, but it worried Damascus to some extent, especially after Mahmud Kazem Khonasir's long visit to Lebanon, where he met with a large number of leaders and prominent public figures."

However, the source went on to say that "there is no fear at all for continued Syrian-Iranian relations as long as President al-Asad is in power, since he represents a fundamental guarantee for these relations and also for Hizballah's role in Lebanon, existence, and future."

Iran: Commentary Views Syrian Talks With Israel Over Golan

LD1706203996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1700 GMT 17 Jun 96

[Station commentary: "The Principles of Netanyahu's Plans"]

[FBIS Translated Text] While Netanyahu's extreme slogans during the Zionist regime's elections were, on the one hand, being interpreted by the gullible supporters of the compromise trend as part of his efforts to gain votes, the announcement of his programs once he assumed office as prime minister, has rendered despondent all those who had set their hopes on the progress of the compromise trend.

Topping the list of Netanyahu's programs are: preventing the establishment of a Palestinian government; keeping Jerusalem as the capital of the Zionist regime; continuing to build settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, and Golan regions; refusing to return the occupied Golan regions and deploying military force to smash the opponents of the Zionist regime everywhere.

Taking note of these principles, the implementation of the final stages of the agreements signed between 'Arafat and the Zionist regime could become practically null and void.

On the basis of the agreements signed, in the final status talks concerning the formation of the Palestinian government, decisions have to be made over the future of Jerusalem; the borders between the Zionist regime and the self-rule government, and the status of the settlements in the self-rule region. Yet, Netanyahu has already announced his unilateral decisions over these cases.

In this respect, the negotiations between Syria and the Zionist regime become meaningless. This is because Syria is arguing that the Golan is occupied and is calling for the return of those regions, whereas, the new prime minister of the Zionist regime is emphasizing the sovereignty of the Zionists over these regions and, in this way, ruling out their return to Syria.

Iran: Khamene'i Addresses Islamic Publicity Organization

LD1706114896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Eminence Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, the eminent leader of the Islamic revolution, addressed a gathering of officials from the Islamic Publicity Organization [IPO] this morning. He expressed satisfaction about the formulation of programs and the far-sightedness of the IPO, and said that the resolution of the country's cultural problems required precise and comprehensive planning.

At the meeting, the eminent leader said that day-to-day activities and responding to everyday needs was not in keeping with the status of the IPO and added: By establishing short courses, the IPO can teach effective publicity methods to the preachers that are sent to villages, factories, and various institutions. In this way, it will be able to send them to any region, as required, as effective and competent preachers.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i described as constructive and necessary the proposal to establish a fund at the IPO for the development of mosques and said: In accordance with a correct, blessed, and well-known tradition among Shi'is, mosques and prayer centers are built, repaired, and developed using money from ordinary people. In this way, the people can express their attachment to their mosques and prayer centers. Popular donations must be attracted toward this fund to this end.

The eminent leader of the Islamic revolution spoke of the IPO as one of the blessings of the revolution, saying: The IPO and the Islamic Culture and Guidance Ministry must avoid carrying out parallel tasks and they must each perform their specific and natural duties. The IPO is also responsible for undertaking any publicity task that remains undone and for which no-one is responsible. Fortunately, this is what the organization is doing and it is expected that the only common feature between the IPO and the Islamic Culture and Guidance Ministry will be the notion of publicity, and that the activities of each of them will be confined to their own specific jurisdiction. [passage omitted]

Iran: RESALAT on Importance of Majles-People Bond

NC1506082896 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 10 Jun 96 p 16

[Editorial: "The Right Rapport"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Even in the period since the Fifth Majles elections and perhaps even a few days earlier, a variety of views have been put forth on the priorities of the Majles. Nowadays, when the vetting of the candidates' credentials has almost ended and as the executive board's composition is completed, the number of suggestions has once again proliferated.

I think the most urgent priority is for the Majles to be cognizant of itself, and for it to have a clear and correct perception of its position and status. Only then can it take suitable steps during the next four years to enhance the credibility of the Islamic Majles and to preserve and boost its lofty prestige.

This is a point that requires the utmost attention at the beginning of every new Majles term, in view of the entry of a large batch of new deputies. This is especially important if some of the factions and groups are also working outside the Majles. By using all the resources and authority placed at their disposal, they should take over control of its affairs. The Islamic Majles should view itself only as a perceptive eye to identify expediencies and plan expertly and vigilantly for the implementation of the great leader's exhortations.

Following this period of introspection, the new Majles will be able to understand the exigencies of its time and place and will be able to formulate programs for greater adherence to the Constitution. Naturally, each Majles term has a momentous obligation to implement the Constitution and should take measures to satisfy all the needs of society in keeping with the spirit of the Constitution, and paying intensive attention to its principles and substance.

Accordingly, in view of the new circumstances prevailing in today's society, some of the principles and contents that have not been put into practice so far may be more efficacious. For example, as in the fourth term, the Majles has been able to take effective steps in investigating certain national affairs by applying Article 76 of the Constitution.

It is obvious that a prerequisite for implementing the Constitution is for the deputies to be precisely conversant with their own and the Islamic Majles' powers and obligations. The entire spectrum of obligations — from those of the Accounts Office Committee, which is responsible for all the accounts of ministries, government institutions, and companies under the supervision of the Majles, to those mentioned in the Articles 84, 88, and 89 etc. — makes the deputy responsible to the entire nation and gives him the right to express his opinion on all issues of domestic and foreign policy.

In Articles 122 and 134 the position of the Majles is so elevated that the President is made responsible to the nation, the great leader, and to the Islamic Majles. The great leader of the revolution's message to the Fifth Majles is the most lucid corpus of guidance for self-realization by the Majles. It can be gleaned from its substance that his eminence favors a Majles that is "Islamic," "popular," "unified," "capable," and "that can unravel the knots" so as to perform its weighty obligations and rise to the expectations of society in these circumstances.

In his message, he even pointed out the way to instill these characteristics in the Fifth Majles. The main issue that elicited special attention is the forging of a rapport between the government and the Majles, as this will transform the Majles into a strong, problem-solving bulwark for the government, while on the other hand it will not hinder the Majles' supervision of the government's performance.

There is no doubt that one of the necessities of today's society and one of the heavy obligations of the Fifth Majles is the forging of the proper kind of relationship, inspired by the Constitution and the exhortations of the great leader and by the traits of "proficiency," "Islamism," and a "unified," "popular" Majles. On these traits, he emphasized, will depend how this bond is forged.

In order to elucidate the importance and sensitivity of the evolution of such a relationship between the government and the Majles, it is necessary to emphasize two points:

First, due to the philosophy of the separation of powers, their supervision of one another's performance, the safeguarding of the interests of the people, and the concern that administrative officials could reach a backdoor understanding to divide up the national assets and thus trample the interests of the people. The segregation of the three branches of government is provided for in the Constitution.

Second, there is a lesson to be learned from the vices of governments in which officials colluded with one another to indulge in luxury and extravagance and thus distanced themselves from the people. The former Soviet Union would be a good example of such a catastrophe, where those who claimed to be the champions of the people created a generation gap between themselves and the people. The leaders became accustomed to luxurious living in the Tsarist palaces on a thousand and one pretexts. Thus, a wide chasm emerged between their standard of living and that of the people and all that the people remember about them today is their crimes and tyranny.

Today, praise be to God, the Islamic system is blessed with people who are providing better service to the people than in any other country. We should therefore find a way to establish the correct relationship between the Majles and the government so that this wholesomeness and virtue is preserved and so that as soon as the slightest aberration is observed it is tackled categorically.

There is no doubt that the esteemed executive committee will — in view of past experiences — bear in mind its momentous obligation in approving laws while establishing such rapport. This is especially true since the great leader has stated that the possibility of satans infiltrating the ranks of the pious executive officials of the country and enticing the deputies is not farfetched. He warned the esteemed deputies to continue to uphold their qualities of "frankness," "speaking the truth," and "nobility."

Conversely, if this relationship is not forged correctly, a few may not be able to differentiate between mere consultancy and actually doing something. Perhaps the particular opinion of a deputy as opposed to that of the executive officials may result in the suspension of a development project in his particular constituency. Executive officials may even ask the deputies their bank account numbers so that they can be reimbursed for their electioneering expenses. It is possible that a deputy might be offered dozens of mobile telephones, or that a deputy might even act as an intermediary between the deputies and the executive officials and may thus gain a free hand in obtaining facilities or get his services for lobbying purposes to elicit votes.

In any case, there are certain serious fears, and the fact is that during the elections certain malpractices such as abuse of the Treasury did take place. Fortunately this did not go unnoticed by the judiciary. It is hoped that the people will be informed whenever an abuse of funds is categorically dealt with and told what action has been taken.

However, the executive committee is in charge of safeguarding the sanctity of the Majles and it is expected that by approving the necessary laws and regulations it will fulfill its crucial obligations. Announcing the name of any possible offender from the Majles tribune [preceding word in English, transliterated in Persian] within the proper boundaries, is one of the measures which the executive committee can take. Similarly, the Article 90 committee is also responsible for investigating violations by deputies.

We hope that the Fifth Majles will achieve the honor of forging the correct rapport between the government and the Majles.

Iran: Minister Says Iran Can Handle Higher Kazakh Oil Output

LD1706152196 Tehran IRNA in English 1455 GMT 17 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, June 17, IRNA — Iran is already capable of handling higher volumes of Kazakh oil than the initial 40,000 barrels per day [bpd] and could even up the amount to 500,000 bpd very easily within a year or two, says its oil minister, Gholam Aqazadeh [-Kho'i].

There was enough pipeline in Iran for greater cooperation on exports in future, Kazakhstan would "only need to connect to the network," he was quoted by PETROLEUM ARGUS WEEKLY saying after OPEC's conference in Vienna earlier this month.

Kazakhstan is reported to be ready to start its oil exchange agreement with Iran next month after the 10-year deal is formally signed in which planned volume will eventually rise to 120,000 bpd.

Under the arrangement, Iran will refine the crude at its Tehran or Tabriz refineries in exchange for an equivalent amount of Iranian oil to be made available for export from the Persian Gulf.

Iran has three pipelines from the Caspian, which Aqazadeh said would be "no problem" in handling around half a million barrels from the land-locked states.

He said that the distance from Kazakhstan to Iran was very short and that it would be "very easy in one or two years" to establish pipeline connections.

Commenting on Iran's recent agreement to take a 10 per cent stake to develop Shakh Deniz oil field in Azerbaijan, the minister said the Caspian had "good capacity for development" but doubted if the region's potential was as "huge" as claimed by others.

On Iran's South Pars gas project, he confirmed that a European consortium, including Gaz de France, was nearing completion of a study that shows that the reservoir's depth was "much greater" than previously thought.

Aqazadeh predicted that Iran's oil production capacity of 4.2 million bpd would rise by around 400,000 bpd as a result of offshore development, with the expansion of Abu Zar due to be ready by the end of the year and Sorush and Bahregan Sar in 1997.

Iran: Paper Questions Press Board Decision on Student Publication

LD1406222496 Tehran 'ASR-E MA in Persian 12 Jun 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "More on the Press"]

[FBIS Translated Text] We read in the news that the PAYAM-E DANESHJU [Student Message] has been banned again and that after a speedy trial, its licence has been revoked. Some aspects of the court scene were even shown on television channel five.

Therefore, there are grounds for hope that the press court has become active to the extent that it can, in less than 10 days, reach a decisive decision about the position of a publication. The radio and television broadcast some scenes from the trial in a bid to confront rumors that have naturally been circulating. Yet, the speed of action gives rise to certain questions such as: Why have the [Press] Supervisory Board and the Judiciary not yet clarified the fate of the JAHAN-E ESLAM newspaper, which has been banned from publication for almost two years; or, why don't they attend to the case of BAHAR [Spring] weekly which has remained in a state of uncertainty for almost three months now?

If the supervisory and judicial authorities are so certain that they can, through the legal channels, so speedily determine whether a newspaper should be published or not, why don't they openly publish whatever notice they have given to the country's press, including the SALAM newspaper?

Where in the world is it customary for the Press Supervisory Board to call a meeting and announce that it has issued some admonitory notices to several publications but that these notices have never been received by those to whom they were addressed; and that the publications in question should remain ignorant of the reasons for which they are being admonished? Legal issues need to be transparent and nothing will take root in an ambiguous climate, not even cultural activities.

On the other hand, we know that regulations governing publishing in our country are to a certain extent ambiguous and thus they are sometimes implemented arbitrarily and against the spirit of the declared rules and regulations, in such a way that for mere displeasure over a sentence a newspaper can be closed down. Those who are interested in culture and thought demand that the channels for the transfer of ideas — be they printed or verbal — should be fully defined and clarified in order to reduce existing apprehensions. Thus, the necessary bedrock for the elevation of Iranian and Islamic culture and civilization be secured.

This is one of the important duties of the Fifth Majles. We hope that these laws will be reformed, completed, and clarified precisely and comprehensively.

Iran: SALAM Reader Questions Press Supervisory Board Decision

LD1406194696 Tehran SALAM in Persian 11 Jun 96 p 3

[From the "Hello Salam" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Reader's question] There is no doubt that the weekly "Payam-e Daneshju" ["Student Message"] committed an offense which, even in the freest of countries, would have dragged it through the courts. I was wondering why the Press Supervisory Board felt that it should act on behalf of the courts in the case of this publication which had committed an offense that should have been tried in the courts.

[SALAM] The Press Supervisory Board believes that it can close down a publication, on the basis of the law, if that publication has committed offenses — even if those offenses have not been proven in a qualified court of law; and, in spite of repeated protests by press chiefs against the Press Supervisory Board's interpretation of the law in this regard. The board members have not yet been prepared to take part in a roundtable discussion with press chiefs and defend their position.

Whether the "Payam-e Daneshju" publication is guilty of an offense or not, we should wait for the court's verdict since it is this rather than the interpretations of individuals or other sources that can act as a source for action.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Finance Minister Presents Budget

BK1706132496 Islamabad Pakistan's Minister of State for Finance Budget Presentation in English 13 Jun 96

["Text" of speech by Makhdoom Shahabuddin, Pakistan's Minister of State for Finance, to the National Assembly in Islamabad on 13 June]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bismallah-iri-Rahman-ir-Rahitn Mr. Speaker, Sir By the Grace of God, the PDF [Pakistan Democratic Front] Government is placing the third budget before the House.

2. It has been an arduous task since we began our journey in the dark despair of a shattered economy in October 1993. The country, in the words of the interim Prime Minister, stood on the edge of bankruptcy due to the profligate expenditure of the previous regime.

3. We have come a long way. But we still have a long way to go.

4. When we started our journey in October 1993 the budget deficit stood at 8%. That was the official figure. It was a lot more when deferred liabilities and inexplicably higher bank borrowing are counted. The foreign exchange reserves were down to $300 million. Domestic borrowing had gone up to 45% of GDP. Inflation was in double digits.

5. The previous regime had almost borrowed, as much in three years as had governments since 1947 to 1990.

6. The future looked bleak.

7. Ship of the state seemed at sea with no direction.

8. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the then political leadership failed to give a direction to the country to follow.

9. Sectarianism, ethnicity and the Klashnikov culture were eating into the vitals of our economy and polity. The situation in the port city of Karachi had deteriorated to such an extent that the Army had been called in.

10. Our relations with the world's sole superpower were at a low ebb.

11. There were threats of Pakistan being declared a terrorist state. The activities of militant Arabs who had come to fight the Afghan Jihad cast a long shadow over our relations with our Arab brothers.

12. Civil War threatened to stalk the majority province of Punjab where federal forces and provincial forces were eyeball to eyeball.

13. The secretary of the provincial assembly was kidnapped and it was alleged that members of the federal government had kidnapped him.

14. Even elected parliamentarians were not safe. MNAs and MPAs were kidnapped at the hands of federal and provincial agencies in a bid to make them change their loyalties.

15. The notorious twelfth amendment was passed in half an hour.

16. Article 147 was passed by dictatorial fiat without even being on the agenda of the day.

17. The free media were targeted in a bid to silence criticism.

18. Just four members of the ruling family had taken Rs. 14 billion from the banks. Politics was an instrument of trade.

19. Corruption had reached a nadir. Lucrative postings in the banks, Customs, FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] and other organisations were used as instruments of political bribery.

20. We believe that democracy is the best system. We believe that change must come through peaceful and democratic means and through the mandate of the people.

21. That is why the PDF manifesto declared "An Agenda for Change".

22. In keeping with our Agenda for Change, we have sought to clean up the political and economic system.

23. We did not provide political protection even to two of our own MNAs when their arrest was sought by the Anti-Narcotics Force and the State Bank of Pakistan.

24. We asked them to approach the courts and the judicial system to get relief.

25. We prevented cabinet members from taking loans from government banks because we believe politics and trade are two separate items.

26. Instead, we have recovered huge sums usurped by the unscrupulous.

27. We put an end to political postings in the banks, CBR [Central Revenue Board], FIA to end corruption at the political level and to ensure a chain of command.

28. We would be the first to admit that while we have curbed political corruption, we still have to put an end to the bureaucratic corruption introduced into our system by General Zia's regime and of his associates.

29. Bureaucrats with powerful positions were shifted out to send a message that this government will not tolerate corruption.

30. These included the heads of several important organisations.

31. A banker with billions in his possession, who had reportedly bankrolled the rigged elections of 1990, could not buy anyone in this government and was convicted.

32. Another banker was arrested when a complainant came forward with prima facie evidence.

33. Officers of CBR were arrested when a complainant came forward with prima facie evidence.

34. This is a political government with a political agenda and the political will to change the political landscape of Pakistan for the better.

35. We are not interested in power or cheap gimmicks to stay in power.

36. We see office as a solemn commitment with the people of Pakistan to take decisions in the national

interest for a progressive, prosperous and enlightened Pakistan.

37. Sacrifice is needed for a better future for our people. Not false promises.

38. We take people into confidence on all the major issues.

39. The most important issue facing Pakistan as we enter the 21st century is to put our economic house in order.

40. If we do not do that, poverty will increase, unemployment will increase, inflation will increase, misery will increase, deprivation will increase.

41. We will not permit this. People of Pakistan will not permit this.

42. We see Pakistan as a modern Islamic Social Democracy, a voice of moderation in the Muslim world. We see Pakistan as part of a global value system fighting the forces of terrorism and drug dealers who are merchants of death. We believe in safeguarding the rights of women, children and minorities. We believe in relieving the burden of poverty, of marginalisation. We believe in removal of regional disparities. We believe in protecting the environment. We have planted 2.6 million trees in 3 seasons in the hills of Abbottabad alone. We believe in promoting human rights, defending freedom and resisting aggression whenever it raises its ugly head.

43. Our valiant troops have contributed to world stability by taking part in United Nations peace keeping efforts. Recently our police have also been enlisted for global duties.

44. We have a global outlook. And we have a clear regional vision. Pakistan is a country at the crossroads to the Gulf, Central Asia and East Asia. We are proud of our identity as Muslims and as Asians.

45. Change has come in the world in a big way with the end of the Cold War. And change brings with it challenge and opportunity.

46. We must have the vision to grasp the opportunity or the challenge will overcome us and leave us behind in the race of time, space and progress.

47. We cannot allow this. We must not allow this. For the sake of our children and for the sake of the unborn children of Pakistan.

48. Our economy was fueled in the fifties through our alliances with SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] and CENTO [Central Treaty Organization]. In the sixties the green revolution brought us a bonanza.

49. In the seventies we had the oil boom and the Gulf remittances fuelling our economy. In the eighties we had the Afghan Jihad and aid from all over the world with $4.2 billion coming in from the United States alone.

50. The bonanza days are over. From where do we now get the capital to keep our economy growing, to provide jobs, to industrialize?

51. That is why this government is focusing on foreign investment so that the economy can grow, the youth can get jobs, we can repay our debt, keep our defence in a state of preparedness and alleviate poverty through social development such as in education, health, water supply and sanitation.

52. By the Grace of Almighty Allah, we have attracted $ 3 billion in foreign private investment in three years. Compare that to $ 2 billion foreign private investment in the last 20 years.

53. Foreign Investment doesn't come without infrastructure. That is why we have concentrated on ending load-shedding and building roads and bridges.

54. Foreign investment doesn't come without social infrastructure. That is why we have created district governments through Social Action Boards to expedite building of schools, health units, water supply and sanitation schemes.

55. We have raised a women's army to combat infant mortality a population growth.

56. We have revolutionized Pakistan by introducing the FAX machine, digital pagers, cellular telephones, optic fibre, satellite dishes.

57. We have sought to give the benefits of modernity to a people who have only known backwardness by providing sui gas, telephones and electricity on a grand scale.

58. We have sought to eliminate Polio.

Mr. Speaker,

59. We owe all that has been achieved so far to the wisdom of the working classes, the middle classes, the peasants, farmers, traders who realised that Pakistan faced a crisis and to get out of that crisis difficult measures were required, taxation was required, sacrifice was required, that the price had to be paid if we were to survive the challenge and turn it into an opportunity of progress and prosperity for our children, ourselves and our motherland.

60. The foreign investment we are seeking to attract is to replace the money we have lost through the end of SEATO, CENTO, Green Revolution, oil remittances and the Afghan situation.

61. This foreign investment is predicated on a sound fiscal management which enjoys the confidence of the international financial institutions, including the IMF and the World Bank, on political stability in the country and on our ability to project and promote Pakistan as an ideal place for investment.

62. Our understanding with the international financial institutions has led to Pakistan becoming a member of the ten emerging capital markets of the world.

63. But our understanding also means we have to reduce the fiscal deficit and document our economy.

64. Documentation of the economy is strongly resisted by groups which have managed to hide their incomes for a long time.

65. In this they have also been aided and abetted by unscrupulous elements in our Revenue system.

66. We are keen, to overhaul the Revenue system and the Ministry of Finance will be keeping a close watch on it.

67. Already we have succeeded in recovering higher yields from the existing taxes.

Mr. Speaker, Sir

68. We have calculated the budgetary gap at Rs.[rupees] 41 billion with the aim of reaching 4% deficit by FY 1996-97.

69. The budget deficit was over 8% when we took over.

70. We have been bringing it down point by point every year.

71. One deficit point reduction this year means Rs. 25 billion.

72. Out of Rs. 41 billion, we are raising Rs. 25 billion to reduce the budget deficit caused by the Nawaz regime by one point.

73. That leaves only Rs. 16 billion as our own budgetary gap, which is an extremely low figure in terms of GDP.

74. When a government takes over it inherits the good or the bad.

75. The previous regime inherited the good — a deficit of 6.5% and GDP growth of 4.6% for fiscal year 1990-91.

76. They blew the money on grandiose non-development schemes and took the deficit well past 8%.

77. We inherited the bad, a deficit of over 8 per cent and a GDP growth of barely 2 per cent. Year after year, slowly, painfully, the nation is reducing point by point the deficit which means taxation.

Sir,

78. I would like to take the Nation into confidence on what we call "mota hisaab kitaab" (thumb rule accounting). It is as follows:

Income for FY 1996-97: Rs.280 billion

Expenditure for FY 1996-97:		
	1. Debt servicing:	Rs.186 billion
	2. Defence:	Rs. 131 billion
	3. Civil government (including Rangers and Maritime forces, Foreign Affairs):	Rs. 47 billion
	4. Grants to Provinces, AJK [Azad, Jammu and Kashmir], Railways, etc.:	Rs. 22 billion
	5. Subsidies:	Rs. 8 billion
	6. Development:	Rs. 105 billion

79. That means while our expenditure is nearly Rs. 500 billion, our income is less than 300 billion. So we are still living beyond our means.

80. But our major expenditure is debt repayments. Due to the debt taken in the past, every year our debt repayments increase.

81. We want to institute a debt management policy. Our policy is to encourage investment, but our preference is to finance it by real, genuine saving. Our goal is self-reliance.

82. Not only does our debt increase but every year our population increases and there are more mouths to feed.

83. In 1947 the population of West Pakistan stood at 3 crore.

84. In 1971 it stood at 6 crore.

85. In 1995 it is more than 13 crore.

86. That is why we say we must control our population growth. That is why we have made highest ever allocations for the population welfare programme.

87. We have put the patient on the Road to Recovery.

88. The recovery is evident from the fact that the economy will grow by 6.1% in the current year, as against 4.4% in the previous year and only 2.3% two years ago. In this dramatic turnaround, agriculture has played a major role, with output increasing by 6.7% this year, as against a decline in growth two years ago. The cotton crop has been fully rehabilitated.

89. The dynamism of the economy and confidence in its future is reflected in rising investment trends. The overall private fixed investment went up from 8.9% of GDP to 9.9% in 1995-96. There has been a record inflow of foreign investment, totally $3 billion since Government took over or nearly $1 billion a year.

90. Inflation has been contained but needs further lowering. This means tight control over fiscal deficits and monetary expansion. In the current year the increase in money supply will be around 12% which is very near the target.

91. The investment plans for the next year, both for public and private sector are based on the confidence that the momentum of economic growth will be maintained. We expect that increase in output will be 6.3% in 1996-97 with a marked acceleration in the industrial sector.

92. The budget provides for a public sector development programme of Rs 105 billion, 8.6% higher than the current year. Every agency and sector will receive higher allocation but specially high increases are earmarked for family planning, education and environment.

93. The priorities, adopted and announced by Government will be pursued. The objectives of development spending in the public sector, will be the improvement of urban, agricultural, social and economic infrastructure to provide a base for rapid output growth in the private sector. The most significant component of the development strategy will be the Social Action Programme for which Rs 62 billion has been earmarked, which includes Federal contribution and Provincial contributions in terms of development as well as recurrent budgets. There is not enough time to narrate all the development initiatives taken by Government, which are adequately described in the budget documents.

Mr. Speaker, Sir

94. No one likes the taste of medicine. It is always bitter but without it the patient will die.

95. The medicine of economic reform and adjustment is bitter.

96. Our survival and well being as a Nation state, as a proud and self- respecting Nation, lies in taking the medicine, curing ourselves and emerging full of health.

97. This we can and must do.

98. This we are doing.

99. We believe the people of Pakistan have the courage to accept the challenge, overcome it and turn Pakistan into the Pure land of Opportunity and progress.

100. That is our dream, that is our desire, that is our goal. Fate has not decreed that Pakistanis should live in poverty and backwardness.

101. Narrow minded rulers foisted on this Nation through constitutional interruption and rigged elections have created this mess.

102. We have come with the mandate of the people with the courage to clean up this mess despite the machination of vested interests that seek to undermine our efforts for selfish reasons or for greed of power.

103. We have principles and an ideology. We are following the footsteps of Quaid-i-Azam and Quaid-i-Awam.

104. 1997 will be the year of Pakistan's golden jubilee.

105. That will be the time to pay homage to our leaders, who fought for liberation and who became shaheeds of democracy.

106. That will be the time to honour the sacrifices of our people in the course of freedom, human rights and progress.

107. The high mark of the occasion will be an Islamic summit. A befitting monument will be ready by August 1997 to cherish the memories of the struggle for Pakistan and democracy.

108. The Government and the people will join hands to celebrate this moment of glory with all the pageantry that the occasion demands. All events and programmes will cost Rs. 1.5 billion. The money will not be raised through budget, but outside the budget.

Sir,

109. May God guide us in taking the correct path in redeeming the people of Pakistan from the chains of poverty that unrepresentative rulers foisted.

110. Before I come to the details of the budget, let me say that.

111. A prime objective of economic policy, is the reduction of fiscal deficit to sustainable levels. What is a sustainable level may be a matter controversy but it

cannot be denied that the achievement of fiscal stability is a paramount necessity for economic growth. A reduced fiscal deficit is essential for growth, for control over inflation, for freeing resources for private sector, for increase in savings and investment, for improved external credit worthiness, and higher foreign investment flows. Along with reduction in fiscal imbalances, economic reconstructing must also go on. Pakistan firmly believes in macro-economic stability and the economic reform and intends to adhere to the standby agreement with IMF and hopes to negotiate a medium term Extended Structural Adjustment facility.

Mr. Speaker, Sir!

112. In the Budget Estimates for 1995-96 the net revenue receipts were estimated at Rs. 266 billion. The revised estimates now stand at Rs. 261 billion. The budget estimates of expenditures (both current and development) for 1995-96 were placed at Rs 435 billion. The revised estimates for the year are Rs. 440 billion.

113. I now present the budget estimates for 1996-97 before the House.

114. We estimate the total gross revenue receipts for the year 1996-97 at Rs.413 billion. As their share, the Provinces will receive Rs.133 billion leaving a net federal revenue receipts of Rs.280 billion. Income from capital receipts on net basis will be Rs.26 billion. External resources are estimated to provide Rs103 billion. The Provinces are expected to self-finance the Public Sector Development Programme to an extent of Rs.16 billion. An additional amount of Rs. 14 billion will be withdrawn from the privatization proceeds to finance the development programmes. Against the total resource availability of Rs.439 billion, the current expenditures for 1996-97 are estimated at Rs. 395 billion.

115. We thus estimate that an amount of Rs. 44 billion will be available for the Public Sector Development Programme of Rs. 104.8 billion leaving a gap of Rs. 60.8 billion. We propose to borrow from the banking system upto Rs. 20 billion which at 0.8% of the GDP is well within the safe limits of economic management. We, therefore, require an additional resource mobilization effort of Rs. 40.8 billion for financing our development programme.

Mr. Speaker,

116. Now I come to new resource mobilization measures.

PART II

CUSTOMS

Reform of the taxation system is an essential part of our economic restructuring. Foremost is adequate revenues for the budget must be raised and the tax system made more elastic to economic growth. Rationalization of tariff is necessary so that raw materials are taxed lightly, with higher tariff for components, and finished goods. The system must be outward oriented, with reduced duties on foreign trade, to promote exports and improve industrial efficiency. Simplification of the tax system is needed by removal of exemptions. The tax base needs broadening. The tax administration itself needs modernization.

2. Before coming to tariff changes, I may mention that the abolition of 10% regulatory duty and reduction in maximum tariff rate from 65% to 55% has been postponed. This is because budget deficit reduction is a more urgent task than tariff reform. Nevertheless, anomalies are being removed to soften the impact of removal of exemptions.

3. Import duty on export oriented machinery has been reduced to 10% on specialized textile machinery including jacquard, dobbys, embroidery, lamination, flocking and coating equipment for preparing special flame retardant fabrics etc. Printing blankets, designs and patterns for textile etc. are also being brought down to 10% customs duty. The rate of duty on binders, glues and desizing agents is being reduced.

4. To encourage the plastic industry, duty on its primary raw material like ethylene, propylene are being reduced. In the case of ortho, meta and paraexylenes duty is being reduced to 5%. Duty on pulp required for the manufacturing paper will be reduced from 35% to 10%. Duty is being reduced on ores and metals falling under Pakistan Customs Tariff Chapter 26. This will help reduce the cost of production of Pakistan Steel.

5. Mr. Speaker Sir, to protect environment and save our forests, duty on various varieties of timber (wood) is being reduced to 10%. Duty on heart pace maker, artificial limbs and other essential requirements of the disabled is being reduced to 10%.

6. Rate of duty on the import of ships has been reduced from 45% to 10%.

7. Mr. Speaker Sir, due to duty reduction many smuggling prone items such as ball bearing, VCR, bus/truck tyres and tubes, spark plugs, and wrist watches have shifted from smuggling to import regime. The duty on these items is proposed to remain in the low range of 10% 15%. In order to encourage import of Kiryana

items like betel-nuts and others, the duty will be substantially reduced.

8. Form-A is being done away with and replaced by Shopping Cards system with additional free allowances of Rs.5,000 and Rs.10,000 for those who stay less or more than six months respectively, for purchases from duty free shops.

9. The duty drawback scheme has been streamlined and arrears of claims will be reduced to the minimum.

10. A number of recommendations made by the Engineering Board has been implemented. For example, where the rate of duty on any imported item becomes less than 35% due to changes in this budget and that item is being locally manufactured, then the rate of duty on that item will be enhanced to 35% on the recommendations of the Engineering Development Board.

11. Duty rates on imported bus/truck tyres and their raw materials, were reduced last year to discourage smuggling. Imposition of 10% regulatory duty later that year created problems for local industry and the importers. It is proposed to reduce duty from 15% to 10% on imported tyres. It is also proposed to abolish 5% central excise duty and to reduce duty on imported raw materials to 10%.

12. In order to protect local industry manufacturing battery separators, it is proposed to levy 10% central excise duty on imported battery separators.

13. The Government has decided to constitute a Fiscal Anomalies Committee in which representatives of trade and industry will be associated. The Committee will ensure that all anomalies are resolved by 31st August, 1996.

14. A Settlement Commission for Indirect Taxes viz. Customs, Central Excise and Sales Tax, is also proposed to be constituted on the pattern of Income Tax Settlement Commission. The Commission will start functioning at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad during the first quarter of 1996-97 to expeditiously recover the arrears.

15. The measure to overcome anomalies is likely to cost the government billions of rupees in terms of revenue. However, with the retention of Regulatory Duty and postponement of tariff reform, the anomalies in the case of plastic and steel have become too glaring to be ignored.

16. Mr. Speaker Sir, the Government is committed to lowering of tariffs over the years. However, the duty rates cannot be reduced without finding alternate sources of taxation. Without a visible improvement in income tax and sales tax, it is not possible to reduce the maximum rates of customs duties from 65% across the board. It is also proposed that regulatory duty of 10% may be levied during 1996-97, as before.

17. The various customs measures will generate revenue of Rs. 7,600 million.

DIRECT TAXES

18. The proposals in respect of direct taxes are principally aimed at removing exemptions and anomalies and providing some equitable base. A few measures for enhancement of revenues are also included.

19. It has been decided to discontinue the system of tax holidays for industry and replace it, where necessary with a tax credit scheme. The removal of tax holidays will plug a tax loophole. Those who qualify for tax holidays, by the terminal date, will be protected. The details are as follows:

a) Time bound tax holidays to fruit processing industry and manufacturers of soft and stuffed toys will expire on 30 June, 1997.

b) Income Tax holidays to fish catching and processing, pioneer electronics and agrobased industries shall also now expire on 30 June, 1997.

c) Tax holidays for export of computer software and export processing zones will be transformed into a tax credit regime w.e.f. 1 July, 1997 which will continue for the unexpired period. Tax credit regime does not involve any payment of tax.

20. Certain incomes, including casual income and those of expatriates which were previously exempted from tax will now be subject to income tax. The list is being circulated separately. We are also withdrawing exemption available to corporate employees in respect of free passage, entertainment, provision of cars for private use and rent allowances.

21. On revenue yielding measures, it is proposed to increase the adjustable advance collection of income tax on commercial vehicles transport and passenger, from the range of Rs.300-5000 to Rs.1200 - 18,000. The advance tax on house rent, exceeding Rs.100,000 per annum will be increased from 5% to 71/2%. Octroi and toll contractors will also pay 5% advance tax, like other contractors. An adjustable advance tax of 10% is also being levied on mobile telephone bills.

23. [number as published] Our system of presumptive taxation has been an irritant for some investors and manufacturers. It is proposed to exclude non-resident contractors, manufacturers and importers-cum-suppliers under certain conditions from this system. They will however have the right to opt for the system voluntarily. Similarly importers-cum-manufacturers are also being

given some relief. A committee is being formed, with representatives of trade and industry to review the regime for removing its shortcomings.

24. The income ceiling for eligibility for 25% rebate in tax for senior citizens, presently upto Rs.100,000 is proposed to be increased to Rs.200,000. Settlement Commission in income tax has proved quite successful. It is proposed to give representation to nominees of business community on the Commission.

25. It is proposed to reduce appeal fees to a reasonable level and to do away with the requirement of mandatory payment. To discourage frivolous appeals, the provision relating to automatic stay is also being removed. Penalties for default in filing of returns will be considerably reduced, with a cap at 50% of the assessed tax.

26. To heighten public awareness of tax obligation, person deriving income from business or profession will be required to display the certificate of National Tax Number at their business premises, and obtaining of tax number cards will be compulsory.

27. Two years ago agriculture was brought within the ambit of the Federal Wealth Tax. The valuation of agricultural land will be, increased from Rs.250 per PIU to Rs.400 and the exemption in respect of houses, will be restricted to only one house, irrespective of number of holdings.

28. In order to encourage better compliance of wealth tax it is proposed that those taxpayers who come out with correct declaration of their wealth, will not be subjected to any additional tax, penalty or prosecution proceedings in respect of wealth tax liability for earlier years.

29. A minimum wealth tax is being levied ranging from Rs.2000 to Rs. 10,000, on all owners of houses or plots who are not borne on wealth tax rolls. The plot sizes are mentioned in the Finance Bill.

30. In wealth tax there is a concept of joint assessment in the form of an association of persons. It is proposed to do away with this concept. All individuals will be assessed to tax in their own hands in respect of their ownership in joint property.

31. Capital Value Tax is being extended to purchase of larger agricultural lands, bigger flats, foreign air travel and certain motor vehicles plying for hire also. National tax number cards are being made available to all taxpayers within the next few weeks.

32. We expect to have additional resources of Rs.2,540 million from these direct tax measures.

CENTRAL EXCISES

Mr. Speaker Sir,

33. Now I want to place before the House the following proposed measures relating to central excises. These are aimed at providing level play-field to the local industry, extending tax relief, introducing tax reforms, rationalizing tariff and curbing evasion of duties.

(I) At present, domestic telephone calls are subject to duty

Clause (13)(1)(28)(III)(iv) Seeks to exempt certain classes of assesses from the application of provisions of minimum tax without any refunds and to provide immunity in respect of years prior to assessment year 1996-97 from probe to persons registered under Sales Tax Act on account of alleged suppression or nondeclaration of sales detected on the basis of their sales tax returns.

It also seeks to provide immunity from probe into investment in business of a new assessed who is assessed under the minimum fixed tax scheme. and seeks to provide for taxability of a resident expatriate employee only in respect of Pakistan income.

Clause (13)(1)(29) Seeks not to allow initial depreciation allowance on plant and machinery which was not purchased in the period July, 1981 to July, 1988 w.e.f. assessment year 1994-95.

Clause (13)(1)(2) Seeks to provide for the applicability of various provision.

CAPITAL VALUE TAX

Clause 15(1)(i) seeks to charge CVT [capital value tax] on purchase of air tickets;

Clause 15(1)(ii) seeks to consolidate list of taxable assets and the rates applicable, in one section;

Clause15(2) provides for the list of taxable assets and the applicable rates of tax;

Clause15(3) seeks to extend capital value tax to vehicles plying for hire;

Clause15(4) seeks to exempt all income taxpayers from levy of Capital Value tax except in the case of motor vehicles; and

Clause15(5) seeks to omit separate reference to rates of tax which have been consolidated;

To meet the legal requirements arising out of the introduction of new customs tariff, certain amendments are proposed to be made in the First Schedule to the Central Excises Act. However, the rates shown in the

Schedule are merely statutory rates and the present effective rates of excise duty remain unaltered except for the measures taken in this budget. The effective rates are given, as usual, in the accompanying notifications.

34. The above measures are expected to yield Rs.2,915 million as additional revenue.

SALES TAX

Mr. Speaker Sir,

35. The wide-ranging reforms in Sales Tax, to which I now turn, recognize the need to address and resolve the following issues:

* Inequitable treatment of taxpayers * Numerous exemptions * Refund of sales tax after six months * Tax on tax, or 'cascading' * Harassment by tax officials * Ambiguity in the law

36. The following steps are proposed to solve these issues and to evolve a VAT type of sales tax:

(i) Existing exemptions at import and manufacturing stages are being withdrawn except those which are being separately notified as exempt from tax. Some significant items to remain exempt are sugar, edible oil, POL [petroleum, oil, and lubricants] products, un-processed food stuff and agriculture produce;

(ii) Goods of essential nature such as medicines and raw materials for fertilizer etc. will be subjected to tax at a lower rate of 5%. A complete list is being separately issued;

(iii) Time-bound SRO's [statutory rules and orders] concerning tax exempt areas such as NWFP [Northwest Frontier Province] and Balochistan will continue till they run out their present life span. However, SRO 561(I)/94 will be amended to allow Sales Tax exemption only to units set up at the cost of one billion rupees or more before 30 June, 1996 and which have letters of credit opened before that date;

(iv) The rate of sales tax was reduced to 10% on 14 items last year. That is being restored to the standard rate. Moreover, some more items are being included in the list of raw materials presently taxed at 20%. Since the entire tax is adjustable, this will have no impact on prices.

(v) The refund of sales tax on acquiring machinery, raw materials and packing materials, consumable stores etc. which cannot be adjusted against the sales tax due on goods sold during the month will be refunded within one month. At present this refund, in case of machinery, is allowed in 2 months while refund on inputs is allowed after six months. This proposed facility will help the tax payers;

(vi) In order to maintain a competitive position in world markets, the export of all goods will be zero-rated. This will mean that sales tax will not be levied on exports. Secondly all Sales Tax incurred by exporters on inputs will be refunded and there will therefore be no hidden sales tax in the price of exports;

(vii) Government has decided that the existing duty draw backs system in respect of Sales Tax shall continue upto 30th September, 1996.

(viii) The goods sold by wholesalers and retailers are not proposed to be subjected to sales tax. However, wholesalers/distributors making supplies of raw materials and intermediate goods will be allowed to voluntarily register themselves so that they can serve as conduit for availing of input tax credit by the manufacturers. This will remove any possibility of tax on tax or cascading. These wholesalers will not pay the tax but will issue invoices for use by the manufacturers; will not file any returns but will be required to maintain proper records which will be subject to audit;

(ix) The fixed tax schemes which are in force upto 30.6.1996 are proposed to be discontinued except for brick kilns. However, smaller units in each industry will pay a turnover tax of 4% if their annual sales do not exceed rupees one million;

(x) Contact of tax officials with taxpayers is being minimized. Only auditors will deal with registered taxpayers. It is also proposed that sales tax return and tax may be deposited in designated branches of banks;

(xi) Inappropriate provisions of the Act such as curbs on the storage and movement of goods, certification of invoices, and an unduly harsh penalty regime etc. will be removed from the law;

(xii)The broad basing of sales tax at import and manufacturing stages will generate revenue of Rs 12,300 million; and

(xiii) In order to generate additional resources of Rs 13.5 billion, it is proposed to increase the standard rate of sales tax from 15% to 18%. The rate of 20% will be raised to 23%. However, every day use goods will be taxed at the concessional rate of 5%. This measure will yield revenue of Rs. 13,500 million.

37. With the introduction of sales tax there is a general apprehension in the business community that a correct declaration of the quantum of their sales might lead to problems with their income tax assessments. In order to provide all businessmen an opportunity of putting their houses in order by declaring their sales correctly in the sales tax returns in the first year, it is proposed to provide an immunity from reopening of previous years'

income tax assessments on the basis of sales declared in the sales tax returns this year. This is a one-time concession. I hope the business community will fully utilize the chance by declaring their sales correctly. Next year all the normal rules in income tax regarding such cases, with all the consequences they entail, shall fully apply. This facility will also be available to those factories which were not paying tax in the past.

38. The changes which I have outlined signal a turning point in the collection of indirect taxes in this country and mark the beginning of a modern system of Value Added Tax. In turn this will enable CBR to more effectively administer the tax without any measurable rise in prices through the credit mechanism which avoids the cascading effect of tax upon tax with which we have been burdened in the past.

FOREIGN TRAVEL TAX

Mr. Speaker Sir,

39. The rates of Foreign Travel Tax were last revised in 1992. These are proposed to be revised and the new. rates will be Rs 1000 per ticket for all foreign travel originating in Pakistan. Furthermore, exemption from Foreign Travel Tax was allowed on tickets purchased abroad or through PTA. This exemption is proposed to be withdrawn. As a result of these two measures, a sum of Rs 1 billion would be generated as additional revenue to the Government.

39a. In addition to these measures, improvements will be made in tax collection system. This is expected to generate Rs. 1,000 million.

DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITAL MARKET

Mr. Speaker Sir,

40. The Government has been focusing its attention on the institutional development of the stock market to attract local as well as foreign investment. With a view to modernizing the functioning of the stock market, all the three stock exchanges are in the process of computerizing their trading. A Central Depository Company has also been established to do away with physical handling of the scripts. Similarly, the Government has been encouraging development of corporate debt market through the establishment of a credit rating agency called Pakistan Credit Rating Agency (Pvt) Limited.

41. All trading in listed securities is required to be routed through the Stock Exchanges under the Securities and Exchange Ordinance, 1969. Investment Corporation of Pakistan and National Investment Trust were however exempt from routing their deals through the Stock Exchanges. This exemption is being withdrawn to make the market more transparent and efficient, through an amendment in the Securities & Exchange Ordinance, 1969.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

42. It is our moral, national & collective responsibility to achieve the goals and objectives and destination set out in the Budget (1996-97). We will cut down our budget deficit in order to have strong, dynamic and sound financial system in Pakistan. We hope that by the grace of almighty Allah, guidance of our leader Mohtarma Banazir Bhutto, and with the support of this august House and the people of Pakistan, our efforts will be successful.

I conclude my Budget Speech with the following remarks:

Pakistan's most valuable asset is its hardworking people;

The past is a lesson to us and,

The future a challenge,

May God guide us at every step. (Aameen)

Pakistan Paindabad [Long Live Pakistan]

Pakistan: Officials Comment on Features of New Budget

BK1406152396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 14 Jun 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Explaining the salient features of the new federal budget, the minister of state for finance, Makhdum Shahabuddin, said the budget will enhance stability, reduce debt burden, accelerate growth, and achieve broad-based development. He told newsmen in Islamabad today that the rate of inflation will be brought down to 8.5 percent and deficit to 4 percent of the GDP. He emphasized that it was the only remedy to most of the country's economic ills. The government will maintain focus on attracting foreign investments, which stood at $3 billion during the tenure of the present government.

The minister of state for finance said the budget maintains emphasis on provision of school buildings, health units, water supply, and sanitation through the Social Action Program. The main ingredient of the budget is to step up resource mobilization to reduce the large resource gap. A new policy has been initiated to reform the taxation system to achieve the twin objectives of efficiency and elasticity. Tax base has been broadened and share of direct tax increased. Coverage of sales tax has been expanded, but food items of common man — like all agricultural produce, meat, poultry, eggs, fish, flour, pulses, vegetable oil and ghee, POL [petroleum, oil and lubricants] products, and fertilizers — have been exempted. He said the budget reaffirmed the strong commitment of the people's government to improve the quality of life of people through rapid development in industrial and social sectors.

Answering a question about no relief to salaried class, the adviser to the prime minister on finance and economic affairs, Mr. V.A. Jaffery, stated that any increase on this count would have added the burden of taxes. This, he said, would also increase debt burden on the national exchequer. The real issue before the government is to check price spiral and the government would not fail in its duty toward this end.

About the reported increase of pay and allowances of the president, the prime minister, ministers, and parliamentarians, he categorically said no increase in this respect is provided in the budget. Only legal cover to previous rise has been given in the finance bill.

The minister of state for finance, in reply to a question, rebutted the assertions of the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, that the proposed budgetary measures would lead to price hike. He said their efforts were directed toward reducing budgetary deficit which they inherited from the previous government. Once the government succeeded in this objective, there would automatically be a check on price hike.

About sales tax, Mr. V.A. Jaffery pointed out that the underlying spirit behind it is to discourage growing consumption trends. He emphasized that the system proposed in the budget for this purpose is elastic and it would be paid by those buying particular items.

Describing the new budget as industry-friendly, the minister of state for finance said it proposes to reduce duty on machinery and raw materials. Similarly, he said, incentives for industrialization have been provided through infrastructure instead of exemptions. The government, he said, has also provided restructuring of loans for sick spinning units, and 29 of them have already been revived.

Pakistan: Minister Reports No 'Mini-Budget' This Fiscal Year

BK1506104696 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 15 Jun 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Absar Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, June 14: Heavy taxation was needed to bring down the budget deficit from 8 percent, during Nawaz Sharif's period, to 4 percent this year and there would be no more mini-budget in this fiscal year, Makhdum Shahabuddin said at the post-budget press conference held here Friday.

Replying to questions, flanked by V A Jafarey, Qazi Alimullah, Secretary Finance and Chairman CBR [Central Board of Revenue], the Minister of State claimed that the budget would not put an extra burden on common man. The people of Pakistan should give sacrifice for a better future, he said. V A Jafarey replying to next question said that the rise in the perks and privileges of the President, Prime Minister, the ministers and the parliamentarians, announced in the budget, could not be withdrawn.

When reminded that the Prime Minister had asked the nation to sacrifice why not the ruling class was shedding their privileges the Minister said, "Why did you not protest it when the perks were announced through an ordinance." He said that now it was impossible to withdraw this rise given to the VVIPs [Very, Very Important Persons]. None of the two ministers, however, explained why the government had not increased the salaries and pensions.

The Minister of State said that the total outlay of the budget 1996-97 is Rs [rupees] 500 billion which is 13.6 percent higher than the revised estimates of Rs 440 billion during the current financial year.

During 1996-97 net federal revenue receipts are estimated at Rs 280 billion with Rs 26 billion as net capital receipts. External resources are projected at Rs 103 billion. A sum of Rs 14 billion would be drawn form privatisation fund to finance the PSDP [expansion unknown]. The self-financing of PSDP by provinces would amount to another Rs 16 billion.

The resource availability during 1996-97 has been estimated at Rs 439 billion as against the budget expenditure of Rs 500 billion. The resource gap of Rs 61 billion is proposed to be met by borrowing Rs 20 billion from the banking sector and generating Rs 41 billion through new resource mobilisation measure as detailed in budget speech yesterday.

A sum of Rs 395 billion would be incurred on current expenditure with debt servicing at Rs 186 billion and defence at Rs 131 billion being the major shareholders. The allocation for development expenditure is Rs 105 billion as against budgeted allocation of Rs 96.5 billion in 1995-96.

The budget seeks to enhance economic stability through structural adjustment. During the next financial year, the Government plans to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4% of the GDP from 5 percent of the GDP during the current financial year. A question arises, why should we reduce fiscal deficit. We have to understand that each year residual fiscal deficit adds to the net debt burden of the economy and the annual debt servicing liability of the Budget which in return reduces our manoeuvreability in succeeding years. A fiscal deficit of 6 percent would mean an additional debt of Rs 150 billion, 5 percent would means Rs 125 billion and 4 percent would mean Rs 100 billion. We have to go on reducing our debt burden, that is our compulsion that is the long lasting remedy to most of or economic ills.

We have sought to accelerate growth of economy and achieve broad development. At the same time we intend to modernize our economy, improve productivity and increase efficiency in all the sectors.

During the next financial year, the government will maintain its focus on attracting foreign investment. Foreign investment does not come without infrastructure that is why we are concentrating on strengthening the infrastructure which would in turn support rapid industrial growth.

We have not ignored social infrastructure and the budget 1996-97 maintains the emphasis of the present government on provision of school buildings, health units, water supply and sanitation thorough the Social Action Programme (SAP). The budget also provides for the raising of the corps of lady health workers to combat infant mortalities and population growth in the rural areas under the Prime Minister's programme for Family Planning and Primary Health Care.

The privatisation policy has been made more transparent.

The fiscal management of the economy enjoys the confidence of the international financial institutions including IMF and the World Bank. We intend to adhere to the stand-by-Agreement with the IMF and hope to negotiate a Medium Term Extended Adjustment Facility during 1996-97.

The main ingredient of the strategy of our budget is to step up resource mobilization effort. It is very essential to reduce the large resource gap which results in mounting debt servicing liabilities. To reduce this gap as well as finance many development projects in vital areas of the economy, additional resources are required. A new policy has been initiated to reform the existing taxation system to achieve the twin objectives of efficiency ad elasticity. Tax base has been broadened and share of direct tax increased. The coverage of sales tax has been extended in order to document the economy swell a stop check tax evasion. While imposing sales tax we have taken care to exempt food items of the common man, like all agriculture price, meat, poultry eggs, fish flour, pulses, vegetable oils ghee, POL [Petroleum Oil and Lubricants] products and fertilizer.

The budget reaffirms the strong commitment of the People's Government to improve the quality of life of the people through rapid development in industrial and social sectors.

Pakistan: President, Foreign Minister, Others Hold Kashmir Meeting

BK1706151396 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 17 Jun 96 p 10

[Report by Mariana Baabar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD: President Farooq Leghari, Sunday presided over a meeting which deliberated exclusively on the situation in Kashmir. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali, Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh, Head of the Kashmir Committee Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, High Commissioner Riaz Khokhar and other officials from the civilian and military departments involved in Kashmir Affairs.

A spokesman at the Aiwan-e-Sadr when asked said that they would not be issuing an official statement but would be willing to reply to any queries. He described the meeting as a routine one like the one held on Afghanistan last week adding that it gives an opportunity to the President to update himself on the latest issues.

Interestingly the Foreign Minister who usually does not hesitate to talk to the media was extra cautious on the meeting saying that this time he would decline to comment. An official later told THE NEWS that Pakistan's High Commissioner in India, Riaz Khokhar briefed the President on the mood prevailing in the new Deva Gowda government which had recently offered Secretary level talks to Pakistan. The PM had replied that her government would only respond after the Passing of the Budget.

Islamabad's stand on resumption of talks with New Delhi has been that it would be unrealistic to do so unless the key issue of Kashmir was brought to the table. Also in the past Pakistan had suggested some confidence building measures to show New Delhi's seriousness for future talks.

Observers feel though the Janata Party is more liberal than the Congress, it is not fully independent to negotiate with Pakistan on Kashmir and they do not see any breakthrough even if these talks are held.

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